SCOTLAND'S STRUGGLES FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

BERRY

"The Church is comforted."

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Isaiah. 54:17

"The Truth shall make you free." John. 8:32

ERAS OF NONCONFORMITY.

Edited by

Rev. C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A.

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VIII

SCOTLAND'S STRUGGLES FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

JOHN KNOX.

From the celebrated painting in the National Portrait Gallery.

Scotland's Struggles for Religious Liberty

BY

W. GRINTON BERRY, M.A.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES
London: Thomas Law, Memorial Hall, E.C.
MCMIV

PREFACE

THE selection of the title for this ittle volume has been a matter of some difficulty. The name finally chosen is as near to accuracy as publisher and author have been able to contrive. It represents the general tenour of the book.

The following are the principal authorities consulted in the preparation of this short *resumé* of Scotland's religious history: Knox's "History of the Reformation," McKerrow's "History of the Secession Church," Struthers' "History of the Relief Church," Craik's "A Century of Scottish History," Cunningham's "Scottish Church History," Buchanan's "Ten Years' Conflict," Hanna's "Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers," Macewen's "Life of Principal Cairns," Haldane's "Lives of the Haldanes," Butler's "Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland," and Smeaton's "Principal James Morison,"

My debts in other quarters are too numerous to specify.

I only ask that readers of this little volume will bear in mind, in their criticism of it, the aim of the series of which it is a member, and the narrow limits of the space allowed for the handling of an ample subject. I have had to refrain myself from many topics that I should dearly like to have dealt with: in particular I had desired to attempt a picture of that simple and significant figure, the Scots Dissenting minister of the eighteenth century, to estimate the revivals of which Moody and Sankey were the most prominent instruments, and the theological movement represented by the name of Robertson Smith, and to show how each balanced and added to the abiding value of the other; and to indicate how much the cause of the Scots Free Churches has suffered by perverse relations with the journalism of their country. But considerations of space sternly forbade these valiant and ambitious endeavours.

W. Grinton Berry.

September, 1904.

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I

IN THE DAYS OF JOHN KNOX

JOHN KNOX, the greatest name in the history of Scotland, begins his account of the Reformation of which he himself was the chief instrument, by narrating the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton. Hamilton was of high descent, with royal blood in his veins and, like many other nobly-born boys, had been appointed while yet a child to an abbacy. Such appointments, indeed, constituted one of the most flagrant corruptions of the Roman Church at this time. Hamilton passed over from Scotland to the schools of Germany and, attracted by the fame of the University of Wittenberg, proceeded thither and became familiar with Luther.

The fear of the German Reformer had already entered the hearts of the Scottish clergy, and an Act of Parliament had been

passed prohibiting the importation of his books. The shipmaster found guilty of introducing such "filth and vice" into the realm, was liable to be punished by the forfeiture of his vessel. Other persons, in whose possession the volumes were found, might be sent to gaol or heavily mulcted in their goods. This enactment, however, promulgated among a people who were rapidly falling out of sympathy with the clergy and looking away from them to any quarter from which light might break, was of little avail. Luther's books were passed about from hand to hand and did their work of sapping and mining the foundations of the hierarchy. In any case, if it was difficult to exclude Luther's books, it was impossible to keep out his doctrines.

Hamilton brought the seed of the reformed faith across the sea from Germany to his native land. His proclamation of the new doctrines came to the ears of James Beaton (uncle of Cardinal Beaton), Primate of Scotland, who summoned him to the Castle of St. Andrews, where he was examined concerning his teaching, found guilty of maintaining heretical views regarding purgatory, prayers to the saints, prayers for the dead, and going on pilgrimage, and condemned to die by

fire. He was but twenty-four years of age. The fate of Hamilton did in no wise daunt the bold spirits whose eyes and hearts had been opened to the spiritual woes and needs of the realm. Indeed, as "a merry gentleman" told the archbishop, the smoke of Master Patrick Hamilton infected as many as it blew upon.

This was in 1528 when James the Fifth was king; and already the forces of sentiment, opinion, and motive that were to be ranged against each other in the struggle between the corrupt and the purer faith were being set in order of battle. Let us notice some of them briefly.

1528

The Reformers gained their first hold on the popular mind by the point and pungency of their comments on the morals of the clergy. The truth of these denunciations was at once recognised by the people. Indeed the laziness, incapacity, greed, and licentiousness of the hierarchy, in all its grades, were already a byeword. Many of the richest benefices were held by men who could neither "sing nor say," and who had been nourished in vice all their days. The rustics, over their cakes and ale, told scandalous stories about the parish priest. Sir David Lindsay, encouraged by the King (though His Majesty

showed no favour to the reformed doctrines) mercilessly satirised the clergy in thousands of coarse, vigorous, humorous verse. Sir David had little quarrel with the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, but his soul was filled with loathing for the official representatives of that faith in Scotland. And the masses of the people could not but perceive that his indictment was justified.

Indeed, the clergy had sunk beneath contempt. Ridicule was the only treatment of which they were considered worthy. Naturally, in these circumstances, the attendance at the churches—even on festival days—was scanty, and of those who came some behaved irreverently and others turned the House of God into a place of merchandise. The clergy had become a reproach even to the children. The boys of Perth Grammar School, when taken to the parish church one Sunday, hissed the friar who was conducting the service. As for preaching, there was little of it. The clergy were as a rule too self-indulgent to exert themselves to the extent of teaching the doctrines of which they were the paid, official custodians. To suggest that a bishop should preach was a grievous offence, almost worthy of death. The chiefs of the hierarchy were denounced by Friar Alexander Seton,

a Reformation pioneer, as dumb dogs who fed not the flock but their own bellies.

A clergy of this low character could not but excite derision and disgust by the absurd abuse which was frequently made of the spiritual powers of the Church. Themselves far from faultless, the priests were prone to visit the peccadilloes of their congregations with the loudest ecclesiastical thunder. God's malison was pronounced from the pulpit upon the theft of such trifles as a porridge-stick, a flail, or a horn spoon. The Reformers, of course, did not pretend to justify these offences. They merely pointed out that such a punishment as excommunication, "the very separation of man from God," should not be used rashly or for any light cause. The abuse of this instrument of discipline would have lessened the authority of the Church in any circumstances; wielded by men whose easy morality was notorious, the effect was to turn it into a mockery.

The Scottish nobility and landowning class played a prominent, indeed a decisive, part in the Reformation struggle. Without their help Knox would have been powerless, would have had no career. The motives which influenced them were much entangled and of varied moral quality. They had inherited

a turbulent disposition; for generations they had been jealous of the throne; and they could not forgive the Church her fat, broad acres. Those of their order who stood by the Reformers in the early days of the struggle, when there was no prospect of profit from the campaign, were no doubt influenced by pure motives, by honest wrath against the corruptions of the time and honest zeal for the new doctrines. But when the movement had taken root in the hearts of the people and seemed only to need for its success that the nobility should join their forces to it, many of the barons took their stand under the banner of Reformation, mainly to gratify their lust of power and lust of land. Only a minority of them were religious men or took any real interest in theological controversy. Doubtless, brought into immediate contact with men who were burning with genuine Protestant zeal, and breathing the same religious atmosphere, they unconsciously absorbed something of the Reformation spirit and learned to speak its phraseology with ease and the semblance of conviction. Their main motive, however, seems to have been greed, and the end of the struggle found them in possession of nearly nine-tenths of the revenue that the Roman clergy had enjoyed.

Knox himself could avail nothing against the merciless devourers of the Church's patrimony. The ministers of the reformed Kirk were so miserably underpaid that some of them eked out their incomes by brewing ale and selling it to their flocks.

The Reformation in Scotland is often compared with the Reformation in England. It is said that in the northern kingdom the movement was a people's movement, and a truly religious movement, whereas in England it had its origin in the arbitrary fiats of a tyrant king and was made to play a subordinate part in a game of politics. The contrast is legitimate, but let us clearly understand, as far as Scotland is concerned, what it means. The Reformation did not spring from the masses of the people in the sense in which chartism, for example, had its birth in the bosoms of the English artisans and labourers. The Scots peasants and craftsmen were as a rule altogether unlettered, unable to read or write, utterly incapable of originating any movement in the direction of intellectual enlightenment. The warfare against the faith and morals of the clergy was led by some of the purer spirits of their own body. The martyrs, Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart, and the chiefest figure of all, John

Knox, were all in priest's orders. It is true that the new teaching found some of its truest and bravest adherents in the higher class of artisans and the lower middle class. The first martyrs included a butcher, a maltman, and a skinner; a tailor and a baker were among the zealous preachers of the reformed doctrines. In the sense indicated by these facts, the Reformation *was* a people's movement.

And it *was* a truly religious movement. This does not mean that many secular elements did not enter into the struggle and that its issue was not largely decided, under the overruling providence of God, by political motives. Many of the nobles cared little in their hearts for the doctrines of the Reformation, but they were jealous guardians of their hereditary feudal authority and eager to extend the boundaries of their estates. Nor is it to be forgotten that during several years the struggle bore the aspect of a conflict between the pro-English and the pro-French parties, in which the religious issues, though present and powerfully operative, were not predominant. The history of the period is indeed a confusion, and it is a mistake to suppose that there was a clear and straight issue between the sup-

porters of the old doctrines and the champions of the new faith. It is true, however, that the Reformation struggle was religious in its origin, and that the contest moved decisively towards a definite religious end—namely the *entire separation* of the Church from the authority, the polity, and the doctrines of Rome.

The chief forces that warred against the Reformation were the habits of thought, sentiment, and conduct that had been formed during centuries of contented submission to the priesthood, the popularity of the clergy as landlords, the hereditary attachment of the masses to the throne, their hereditary friendship for France, and their hereditary enmity to England.

It is necessary that we should now briefly narrate the events which within a few years culminated in the complete emancipation of the Scots from the thraldom of Rome. The Established Church entered upon a policy of vigorous repression immediately after the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton. King James the Fifth, whose resolve to be free from the interference and dictation of the turbulent nobility that had plagued his predecessors had driven him into the hands of the clergy, aided and abetted the priests in

their campaign of persecution. His marriage with Mary of Guise, a member of the most fanatically Catholic family in Europe, finally extinguished any inclinations he may ever have felt towards the reformed opinions. In the year of his wedding (1539) five oppugners of Roman doctrine were burnt to death in one fire upon the Castle Hill of Edinburgh. It was reported that James had made a solemn vow that no person suspected of heresy should be spared, yea, although it were his own son.

With the death of King James in 1542, and the appointment of the Earl of Arran,

1542

in spite of the hierarchy, as Governor of Scotland for the infant Queen Mary, a more tolerable prospect seemed to open out before the reformers. Arran "favoured God's Word" and he had been marked out for persecution by the priests. These two circumstances secured him, at the beginning of his regency, the best wishes of the anti-clerical party. Thomas Guillaume and John Rough, described by John Knox as men of wholesome doctrine, were appointed as the Governor's chaplains. Against this the priests' party, says Knox, "yelled and roared as devils in hell." "Heresy, heresy," they cried out, "Guillaume and Rough will carry the Governor to the devil."

Parliament decreed (March 15, 1543) that all men and women were free to read the Scriptures in their own tongue or in the English tongue, and all Acts made in a contrary sense were abolished. Up to this time it had been heresy merely to read the Bible in the vernacular. The Act of 1543 purged the Statute book of this shameful law. "Then might have been seen the Bible lying almost upon every gentleman's table, and the New Testament was borne about in many men's hands. We grant that some, alas, profaned that Blessed Word; for some that, perchance, had never read ten sentences in it, had it most common in their hand; they would chop their familiars on the cheek with it and say, 'This has lain hid under my bed-feet these ten years.' Others would glory, 'Oh, how oft have I been in danger for this Book. How secretly have I stolen from my wife at midnight to read upon it.' And this was done of many to make court thereby; for all men esteemed the Governor to have been the most fervent Protestant in Europe."

Arran's position in these troublous times as Governor of a country that was always inclined to be turbulent was very difficult. His alliance was sought by the Court of England and the Court of France. Henry

VIII. stood for the revolt against Rome, Francis for the vigorous maintenance of the ancient faith. Henry sent his Ambassador to Edinburgh to arrange for the betrothal of his son (afterwards Edward VI.) to the infant Queen of Scots. He released without ransom some of the prisoners taken at Solway Moss on condition that they promised to use their influence with the Governor in favour of his proposals. Further, "the hands of the Scots Lords were liberally anointed." But indeed, in the opinion of the reforming party, at that moment enjoying predominance, King Henry's demands were so reasonable that all persons loving quietness were content with them.

The priests and the priestly party offered the stoutest opposition to the acceptance of the English king's proposals. Their arguments at this time, as in subsequent years when Henry was wooing Scotland's Queen for his son by fire and sword, were the arguments of patriotism, stated with skill and eloquence. "From pulpits formerly silent they uttered fierce invectives against the truckling spirit that would sell country, birthright, liberty, and religion to a brutal king." They were prepared to leave their monasteries and their churches, and to carry

arms on the field of battle for their hearths and altars. Nay, more, they were willing, if necessary, to melt down their church plate and to bear the charges of the warfare. And this at a time when some of the Protestant nobles were drawing pensions from the English king and had pledged themselves to unite their banners with his for the conquest of their Fatherland. However, in spite of the opposition of Cardinal Beaton, the Queen-Dowager and the French faction, the contract of marriage between Edward and Mary was read in public audience in Holyrood Abbey, subscribed, sealed, and approved in the strength of the most binding oaths by the Governor and the nobility.

The ink was scarcely dry on this solemn pact when the Governor began to repent him of what he had done. An embassy arrived from France "with terrors, promises, and enchanting boxes." Shortly afterwards Guillaume and Rough were dismissed, and Arran's half-brother (John Hamilton, the Abbot of Paisley) became the most influential person in the entourage of the Governor. He was a stout Papist and persuaded his brother to renew his allegiance to Rome. Stealing away from Holyrood to Stirling, Arran submitted himself to Cardinal Beaton,

received absolution, and repudiated the marriage treaty with England.

The hierarchy was again triumphant, and a fiery persecution was once more begun. Cardinal Beaton renewed his craft and cruelty. At Perth a great number, women as well as men, were summoned before him and accused of heresy. All the guilt that could be brought home to them was that they had eaten a goose on a Friday, yet for this offence four men were hanged and a woman drowned. The poor creature begged that she might die with her husband, but even this humble consolation was denied her. Having handed to the attendants the infant she carried at her breast, she was bound hand and foot and thrown into a pool of water. But the crowning infamy of Beaton in the eyes of the reformers was the martyrdom of George Wishart. This lowly, learned, pious man returned from England to his native country in 1544, "glad to teach and desirous to learn." His person and doctrine found much acceptance among the landed gentry, who were wont to attend his ministrations accompanied by bands of armed retainers.

At Haddington, whither his evangelical journeyings had taken him, he was joined by John Knox, now forty years of age. Our

knowledge of the great Reformer's career up to this point is meagre. He was born in 1505 in or near Haddington, educated in his native town and at the University of Glasgow, and ordained as a priest about 1530. Prior to 1545 he was employed as a tutor in the families of two country gentlemen who favoured the reformed doctrines.

Wishart was arrested in the dead of night, at a country-house near Haddington, by a band of men sent from the Governor and the Cardinal. Hurried off to St. Andrews, he was there condemned to be burnt as a heretic. He was led to the fire, with a rope about his neck and a chain of iron around his loins. When he came to the place of execution he turned towards the people, saying, "Consider and behold my visage. Ye shall not see me change my colour. This grim fire I fear not. I know surely that my soul shall sup with my Saviour this night." The executioner fell upon his knees and begged the martyr's forgiveness. Wishart kissed his cheek and said, "Lo! here is a token that I forgive thee." The priests were evidently in some fear that a rescue might be attempted, for the artillery of the Castle, in readiness for use, was trained towards the place of execution. The gunners

1546

were ordered to stand beside their ordnance until the fell work of the Cardinal was accomplished. "Then," says Knox, "the trumpet sounding, Wishart was put upon the gibbet and hanged, and there burnt to powder."

This was on the 1st of March, 1546. Within three months a band of Wishart's friends, in the execution of a plot to which Henry VIII. was privy, broke into the Castle of St. Andrews, slew Beaton, hung his body over the battlements in full view of the horror-stricken citizens, and prepared the fortalice for an extended siege against the forces of the Governor.

Knox now ranged himself openly and boldly with the resolute Reformers. He joined the little company of besieged zealots at St. Andrews, but it was only after much hesitation, and as the result of the tears and entreaties of his friends, that he would consent to preach in public. When the castle was taken by the French, having sustained a siege of fourteen months, Knox was carried off to slave on a French galley. He owed his liberty, after a captivity of a year and a half, to the intercession of Edward VI., who showed him great favour, and, indeed, offered to make him Bishop of Rochester. After

some pleasant experiences at Geneva, and some experiences not altogether pleasant at Frankfort, where he ministered to the English congregation, he returned to Scotland in 1555.

The year before Arran had resigned the regency to the Queen-Mother, Mary of Guise, a woman of great kindness of heart, but a fanatical Catholic and a habitual offender against good faith. During the six years in which she was at the head of affairs she was continually in conflict with the Protestant barons, who were now known as the Lords of the Congregation, and exercised a great, though informal, jurisdiction in religious matters throughout the country. Indeed, they took it upon themselves, though entirely without legal authority, to issue an ordinance enjoining that Edward VI.'s Book of Common Prayer should be read in the parish churches on Sundays and festivals. They claimed that it should be lawful for the services to be conducted in the vulgar tongue, and promptly refused to concede that the mass, purgatory, and prayers for the dead should be retained. For a long time each of the opposing parties seemed uncertain of its own and the other party's strength, and reluctant to put the matter to a decisive test.

Consequently we find that each seems anxious not to drive the other too far. Another characteristic of the contest lay in the rapid alternations of the fortune of battle. Only a year before their final triumph, the Lords of the Congregation were compelled to clear out of Edinburgh in a hurry and to send desperate appeals to Elizabeth for help. In 1560 the grand issue was decided, the jurisdiction of the Pope was definitely abolished, and the Protestant faith established. Presbyterianism in its essence was the form of Church government adopted, practically the same as that which obtains at the present day. It is pleasant to record that during this bitter struggle—a conflict in which for over thirty years an ancient, proud, and haughty Church was wrestling for her very life—not more than twenty persons met a martyr's fate.

1560

In the following year the hapless Mary returned to her native land, to be confronted with a situation which contained for her the elements of inevitable tragedy. The most tragic of tragedies—really, the only true tragedies are those in which no one can be held to blame for the *dénouement*, in which the sorrowful close seems to be the work of inevitable destiny. No one will deny that

Mary, by her mistakes and her sins, contributed to her own sad fate; but from the beginning the strong living seeds of disaster were present. The Reformation had just been established when the Queen, trained from her infancy to be a zealous Catholic, returned to her realm. The celebration of mass, or attendance thereat, was a crime punished, after two offences, by death. Yet it could hardly be expected that a Catholic Queen, living in the capital of her own country, should deny herself the most precious consolation of her religion.

The Protestant party displayed a quite "plentiful lack" of good sense and tender considerateness in their treatment of the Queen. Within a few weeks of her arrival in Edinburgh the Town Council issued a proclamation ordering all "monks, friars, priests, and other papist and profane persons" to leave the city within twenty-four hours on pain of being branded upon the cheek and dragged through the town at the cart's tail. Mary had sufficient influence to procure the deposition of these very zealous Protestants. One of the representations with which it was designed to entertain her on the day of her State entry into the capital was that of a priest being burnt in the act of elevating the

host! From the pulpit of St. Giles's Church, Knox on several occasions offered the grossest insults to the Queen and her faith. Mary summoned him to her presence and expostulated. These interviews have been recorded by Knox himself, and one is driven sorrowfully to admit, on the evidence furnished by himself, that he behaved with rudeness and brutality. The rough manners of the age cannot be pleaded in his defence, for the tone of the Queen's observations was conciliatory, and Knox's own friends were grieved at his boorish words and harsh behaviour towards their sovereign lady. The truth is that Knox knew he had nothing to fear from the Queen. The position of the clerical Reformers, supported as they were by the powerful Lords of the Congregation, was now practicable, secure and impregnable. Mary was in a weak and rather hopeless minority.

The stormy waters were soon surging around the hapless Queen. Her first great mistake was her adhesion to the treaty of Bayonne, a solemn pact which had for its object the extermination of heresy and the universal establishment of the Catholic faith. Two years later, when she married the man whom common report unanimously named

as the murderer of her husband, her moral downfall was completed. In the same year she was compelled to abdicate, and soon afterwards passed out of existence as a factor in the life of the nation.

The Protestant faith was now securely established, and Knox had accomplished the work to which he had been called. In his closing days he became very feeble in body, walking about with a staff in his right hand and supported on the left by his godly servant. But the fire of his spirit could not be quenched. Although he had to be all but carried into the pulpit, he had not proceeded far with his discourse when he became so vigorous that "he was like to ding the pulpit in blads and fly out of it." He died on the 24th of November, 1572, and a simple slab upon the causeway on the south side of St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, marks his last resting-place.

1572

With doubts and misgivings he had put his hand to the plough, but having in the light and strength of God made his choice, he never looked back, but went forward with inexhaustible zeal and fearless persistence until the fetters of Rome had been destroyed and the people stood in the liberty with which Christ had made them free. He

summoned the individual soul into consciousness; he proclaimed its value, its privileges, and its responsibilities; he asserted, and in the main established, the right of the visible Church to self-government; and he insisted on the application of the law of Christ to the whole domain of human life and conduct, public and private. It need hardly be pointed out that these are among the main principles emblazoned upon the banners of the Free Churches in our day. Knox found his country sunk in ignorance and darkness. He lifted it out of the miry clay and set its feet on the road that led to light and liberty. To Knox, Scotland, as a nation, owes her soul. Under her ribs of death he breathed a living spirit.

II

"THE HEROES OF THE COVENANT"

THE ecclesiastical history of Scotland, during the century and a quarter succeeding the Reformation, consists mainly of a struggle against the harsh and persistent efforts of the Stuart kings to force upon the people a liturgical form of worship and the Episcopal system of Church government. But a deeper and more vital question than either of these was involved—the right of the Church of Scotland to worship God and to govern itself, according to the methods approved by its own reason and conscience. Unless we keep this fundamental truth in mind we shall misread the history of these times and we shall be in danger of attributing to the Scots an absurd punctiliousness, a morbid scrupulosity, an obstinate and fanatical perversity which led them to sacrifice peace, liberty, life itself, on behalf of

causes which did not call for, and were not worthy of these oblations.

The conflict resolves itself round Liturgy and Episcopacy, but these are only the accidents of the situation. It was not for these that the martyrs bled. It was for "the crown rights of Jesus Christ" as the sole head of the Church, and for the indefeasible privilege and duty of the members of Christ's visible body to determine for themselves, under law to Christ alone, the polity of the Christian community. For this cause they endured joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and were willing to undergo the uttermost agonies. The leaders at the beginning of the struggle were not fanatics, but we shall find, without surprise and without shame, that persecution exasperated many noble-hearted men into extreme courses and perverted views. They were willing to die for Presbyterianism (because they believed that that polity had a Divine sanction and because a greater cause than Presbyterianism was in peril), and they were persuaded by the fetid cell, the thumb-screw, the halter, and the stake, into the conviction that it was their duty to impose it, by force if necessary, upon all. It was a grievous error, but natural, excusable, perhaps inevitable.

The first Reformers had no quarrel with Episcopacy as such. Knox as the friend and disciple of Calvin indeed preferred the Presbyterian polity which had been adopted at Geneva. But it never entered his head that this was the only form of Church government which was approved by God, and indeed he had given his adhesion, peaceably though reluctantly, to the establishment of a modified Episcopacy within the Church of Scotland. It is true however that, after the death of Knox, when Andrew Melville became the leading influence in the Church of Scotland, the opposition to Episcopacy, much to the annoyance of the Regent Morton, grew in strength and conviction. "There will never be quietness in this country," said Morton, "till half a dozen of you be hanged or banished." "Tush!" said Melville, "threaten your courtiers in that way; it is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. Let God be glorified; it is out of your power to hang or exile the truth."

1580

The General Assembly of 1580 declared Episcopacy to be contrary to the Word of God, and twelve years later that form of government was abolished. Knox believed that Presbyterianism was the most expedient ecclesiastical polity; his successors

went much further and declared that it was the only polity which the Scriptures allowed —all others were sinful.

Still less was there any inclination in the early days of the Reformation to regard a Liturgy as an accursed thing. We have seen that the Lords of the Congregation had decreed that the Prayer Book of Edward VI. should be used in the churches, and for many years the Geneva liturgy was employed in the reformed Kirk of Scotland. It was on these grounds—Episcopacy and Liturgy—that the great battles of religious liberty in Scotland were fought, but a far more important principle than either of these, a principle of essential and enduring value to the Church of Christ, was at stake. Who was to be the head of the Church and determine its doctrines and polity—the Christian people, represented in this case by the General Assembly, or the civil authority represented by the King?

The issue was very soon joined. Mary Stuart's son, King James VI., fell as an infant into the hands of the Reformers, and from the beginning they resolved to teach him what, in their view, was his proper place. In secular matters he was to be supreme, but in spiritual affairs he was only a member of the Church, and as such must submit himself to its

authority. His tutor, George Buchanan, who is entitled to the credit of having "raised a wondrous crop of learning upon a thin, though sharp, soil," did his best no doubt to inculcate the theocratic doctrine. It was the duty of the State to use the sword of the magistrate for the support of the true faith and the suppression of heresy, but the State must not presume to dictate to the Church in matters of doctrine and polity.

As the young king grew towards manhood he found that this view of his relation to the Church suited ill with his temperament and aspirations. He was not a man of keen chivalric sensibilities, but the harsh treatment which his mother had received at the hands of the Reformers must have been a galling memory. As his mind opened he was more and more inclined to draw away from the Presbyterian preachers. But while merely King of Scots he was forced during the greater part of that period to feign his assent to their pretensions and to give an outward submission to the discipline of the Church. He was only biding his time.

James's accession to the throne of England in 1603 made the weak Scots king a powerful monarch. Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth would have laughed to scorn the claim of the

Church to complete independence. So would he. A King by Divine right, he would be the head of the Church no less than he was head of the State. The flatterers who gathered around him at Whitehall inflamed this ambition and egged on the King to the policy, in Church and State, which finally led to the extinction of the Stuart dynasty, the most foolish and the most unfortunate of the races of kings.

James began by trying the arts of persuasion. With a characteristic lack of humour and a characteristic exhibition of silliness he invited a number of the most prominent Presbyterian ministers of Scotland, including the famous Andrew Melville, to attend a conference at which the Scots were to be convinced, from illumination graciously vouchsafed to them by some burning and shining lights in the English Church, of the superior merits of Episcopacy, the supremacy of the Crown, and the absence of all authority for the office of lay elder. The Scots ministers listened in silent contempt and the conference ended in disaster. Melville referred contemptuously to Archbishop Sancroft's "popish rags," and was punished with five years' confinement in the Tower and banishment from the realm. Such methods of argument did not commend

the King's propaganda to the Scottish people.

James resolved that if the people of his ancestral kingdom would not see and accept the truth, as he saw it, for themselves, it should be forced upon them. The ancient Episcopacy was revived on the authority of the King's own prerogative in 1606, and four years later the General Assembly actually acknowledged the King's supremacy as the head of the Church. The State officials and the time-servers became as zealous for Episcopacy as they had been for Presbyterianism—of course. The people were sullen and silent, many of them began to absent themselves from the services in the parish churches and to meet in conventicles. But rebellion was not in their thoughts. The devotion of the common people to the person of their sovereign was real and undoubted. They were proud to think that they had given a ruler to the richer and more powerful sister kingdom, and there was no inclination to distress and embarrass James in his distant palace of Whitehall.

But the submission they gave to King James was by no means intended to be final. They endured Episcopacy only because they hoped sooner or later to see Presbyterianism

restored. There was little affection between the people and the bishops at the beginning and it did not increase upon further acquaintance. The King, however, showed no signs of relenting. The seeming acquiescence of his Scottish subjects in his arbitrary measures encouraged James in the belief that the people gladly accepted his will as law. He made a decided step forward with his propaganda when in 1621 the Scottish Parliament ratified the Five Articles, introducing various fashions of the Church of England into the Kirk. The private administration of the sacraments was allowed, the people were enjoined to kneel at the Lord's Supper, to bring their children to the bishop for confirmation, and to keep the Church festivals. The national legislative assembly at Edinburgh was not a body that a determined and resourceful monarch found it difficult to manage. At this time it was the most corrupt, crawling, and subservient of gatherings.

1621

The formal ratification of the Five Articles was performed in circumstances which to rude, unenlightened zeal constituted a solemn and awful portent. When the Royal Commissioner, the Marquis of Hamilton, rose to apply the sceptre to the Bills, thus symbolically

giving the royal assent, flash after flash of lightning burst into the House, followed by the angry roar of thunder. A deep darkness settled over the Parliament House and the whole of the grey old city. Rain fell in torrents. Members hastened away to their homes in fear and confusion, and the State Procession of the Royal Commissioner to Holyrood Palace had to be abandoned. For many years afterwards this 4th of August, 1621, was known as Black Saturday.

Four years later King James died and the strife between the royal house and the Scottish nation was renewed with greatly increased bitterness. Charles I. had been brought up as a member of the Church of England. He inherited his father's opinions concerning Episcopacy and the Divine right of kings, and he was prepared to maintain this inheritance with his last resources. But the Scottish people were not willing to endure at his hands what they had accepted in sullen submission from his father. Charles was little more to them than a name. By birth and blood he was a Scot, but his upbringing and education, his tastes and temperament, neutralised his affinity with the race from which his father had sprung. The Scots did not think of Charles as one of themselves.

He was the King of England, living in England, who happened also to be King of Scotland, but they never acknowledged in their hearts that he had the same claim upon their allegiance that his father possessed.

Charles found to his fatal cost that the stubbornness of the Scots was beyond his power and skill of handling. Twelve years after he came to the throne, the crisis which had long been impending was at length reached. Archbishop Laud had prepared a special Service Book for the Church of Scotland, and commandment was made by the King that it should be introduced into the churches on July 22, 1637. Many of the stern Calvinistic Scots regarded Laud's liturgy as merely the Popish breviary slightly disguised, and they resolved not to submit to this new imposition. The day came when the Service Book was to be used in the Church of St. Giles, Edinburgh, for the first time. There was a crowded and keenly expectant congregation. Worship proceeded quietly until Dr. George Hanna, Dean of Edinburgh, began to read from the hated Service Book. A violent commotion ensued during which an elderly woman, named Jenny Geddes, who kept a humble shop in the High Street, rose from the cutty-stool upon

which she was sitting and hurled it at the head of the Dean, exclaiming: "False loon how dare you say mass at my lug (ear)!"

This was but the beginning of trouble. The Bishop of Edinburgh sought to appease the enraged and excited multitude, and it was done unto him as it had been done unto the Dean. The Archbishop of St. Andrews, the Primate of Scotland, who had lent his presence to increase the glory of this high occasion, was also somewhat roughly handled. The provost, bailies, and town councillors descended from their seats in the gallery, and quelled the riot by expelling the brawlers and locking the doors. The Dean was now at liberty to proceed with his reading of the Service Book in the hearing of a sprinkling of quiet, timid, scared-looking people. The expelled worshippers continued their protest by throwing stones at the windows of the church and making a great hubbub. The service ended, the officiating clergy had to use their greatest guile to escape the unpleasant attentions of the mob.

However, the Episcopal authorities did not abandon hope of reconciling the people to the new liturgy. It was announced that three weeks later, namely on August 13th, the Service Book would again be used in the

metropolitan church of Edinburgh. But this bold policy had to be given up, for no one could be persuaded to take the risks of the enterprise. No cleric was found whose zeal for the liturgy was powerful enough to overcome his fear of the stools, the brickbats, and the other arguments of an excited, deeply enraged Scots crowd.

Charles had kindled a fire that he could not put out. The materials for a great combustion had been heaped together during a generation, and the misguided monarch had applied the fatal spark. The opposition to the Government knew that the King would regard the riot in St. Giles's as an unpardonable affront upon his dignity and authority, and they prepared to meet his wrath as a united band. Accordingly the leaders renewed the Covenant, the most famous and the most glorious instrument in the religious history of Scotland. The sign-

1638

ing of this document (February 28, 1638) in the churchyard of Grey-friars, Edinburgh, was an ever-memorable scene. Copies of the Covenant were laid upon the flat tombstones, and devoted throngs pressed forward to subscribe their names to this solemn compact. Some zealots, it is said, opened veins in their arms

and signed the Covenant in their blood. The succeeding generation showed their willingness to seal the testimony of their fathers by the laying down of their lives.

The Covenant pledged those who signed it to defend, even unto death, the true faith according to the Word of God, and to resist to the uttermost the setting up of bishops over the Kirk of Scotland. When Charles heard of these doings he was filled with sad and angry amazement. But he would not be taught wisdom. "I will die," he said, "rather than yield to their impertinent and damnable demands." However, he was constrained to assent to a meeting of the General Assembly. So great, however, was his fear of the Scottish laity that they were forbidden to vote in the election of ministers to the Assembly. This General Assembly, held at Glasgow in 1638, marks a well-defined epoch in the history of Scotland. It was the Covenanters' Assembly, an assembly in which their views were adequately represented, and to which during long years to come they looked back as the chiefest glory of their movement. The Assembly of 1638 was drastic enough to satisfy the extremest zealots. Not only did it condemn the liturgy and the institution of Episcopacy, but

it actually summoned the bishops to its bar, excommunicated eight of them, and deposed the whole bench. Two years later the Scottish Parliament, now beginning to scent the winning side, ordered every one to sign the Covenant under pain of civil penalties.

Charles instructed his Commissioner, Hamilton, to concede anything, to promise anything, if only to gain time. It was the hope of the incensed and perfidious monarch that the English forces of the Crown might be used for the subjection of his refractory Scottish people, but the relations between Charles and a great mass of his southern subjects had been strained to the snapping-point, and he found himself in command of a reluctant soldiery, "with no stomach to the fight." The English people had begun to perceive that the cause of the Scots was the cause of civil and religious liberty, and instead of engaging the army of the Covenant in battle they formed an alliance with it. The Scots soldiers were an efficient element on the side of the Parliamentary forces in more than one battle during the Civil War, and indeed it may be claimed that they decided the issue of the contest. If they had ranged themselves with the royal army it is doubtful whether victory would have rested

with the banners of the King's enemies. So eager were the leaders of the English Parliamentary forces to secure the help of the Scots that they were willing to agree to almost any conditions. In the Solemn League and Covenant drawn up between the allies in 1643, the Scots were led to believe that the provisions of the Covenant of 1638 would be extended to the three kingdoms; in a word, that Presbyterianism would be forcibly established in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The fortune of war landed Charles as a prisoner in the hands of the Scots army. He was delivered to the leaders of the English Parliamentary party on the understanding that no injury should be done to his person. The pledge was broken, and a series of lamentable events, in which the Scots bore no part, ended in the execution of Charles before the windows of his own palace at Whitehall. The Scots regarded this bold and impolitic measure with stern disapproval and the liveliest horror, and transferred their allegiance at once to the king's eldest son, who was crowned at Scone, near Perth, in the ancient palace of the Scottish kings. Charles signed the Covenant and listened with the outward semblance of reverence and attention to the long sermons of the Presby-

terian divines. But Cromwell made a speedy end to the career of the Covenanting king. The Scots were completely defeated at Dunbar and Worcester; Charles fled to France, and Scotland was at the mercy of the man who had brought his king to the block.

Cromwell was an Independent, not more inclined to submit to the persecuting predominance of Presbyterianism than of Episcopacy. He was the first ruler in the history of England who understood and practised the principles of tolerance, and the claims of the Covenanters to impose their faith and polity upon the people of England and Ireland, no less than upon the people of Scotland, must have been peculiarly abhorrent to him. He abrogated the whole legislative machinery of the Church of Scotland—General Assembly included—and dividing the country into three districts, placed in charge of each a superintendent, whose duty it was to see that the spiritual needs of the people were supplied. These peremptory methods were mightily disagreeable to the Scots' temperament, but Cromwell was like the decrees of fate—quiet submission was the only attitude with which he must be met.

The Covenanters hailed the Restoration of

Charles II. in 1660 with great expectations. Had not the Scots taken up his cause when the military party of the English Parliament had slain his father? Had Charles not subscribed the Covenant at Scone, and promised to observe and fulfil it under the most solemn oaths? The hopes that were founded on these facts were doomed to complete and bitter disappointment. The Marquis of Argyle who had placed the crown on the King's head at Scone, in 1651, was executed on a trumped-up charge of treason. Charles knew that it was to the Tory party of England that he owed his restoration to a comfortable and opulent throne, and he was not disposed to be grateful for old services which had been unavailing. As for the Covenant, he cared less than nothing for it. He only remembered, with a yawn, that the Presbyterian preachers had inflicted dreary discourses on him, and that even when his fortunes were desperate he had tried to escape out of their hands.

1660

The Rev. John Sharpe, in whose fidelity and sagacity his brethren had great confidence, and whose known moderation seemed to fit him for a diplomatic mission, was sent to London to win the favour of the King for the Presbyterian polity. Sharpe's "modera-

tion" was evidently more pronounced than the strength of his conviction, for he was won over to Episcopacy and sent back to his country as the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the Primate of Scotland. This apostasy rankled deep in the hearts of those whom he had so shamelessly betrayed, and Archbishop Sharpe was held to be the chief instigator of the persecution that speedily followed. At this crisis the greedy nobles basely deserted the cause of the Church and people. Cromwell's harsh treatment of them had reduced many of them to poverty, they were more eager to repair their estates than to defend the faith that their fathers had established, and they hoped to find compensation for their worldly losses in the favour, the gifts and places, of the restored monarch.

It must be confessed that the Covenanters seriously prejudiced their cause by the unreasonableness of their demands. It was actually proposed that the King should be asked to allow no faith but theirs in the kingdom. The chief promoter of this audacious petition, the Rev. James Guthrie, a man of sweet and saintly character, expiated his boldness with his life, and was honoured by the people as amongst the

noblest of martyrs. The Covenant was publicly burned by the hangman and even to speak of it was declared to be a penal offence. Episcopacy was re-established, three hundred and fifty ministers, including four out of the five Edinburgh ministers, who refused to accept the new order of things, were ejected from their churches and deprived of their stipends. They were forbidden to preach and the people were ordered to attend their own parish churches.

But no Acts of Parliament could estrange the allegiance of the people from their faithful and beloved pastors. They assembled themselves together on the hillsides and on the moors, sometimes in small companies, sometimes in large, to listen to the words of life as they fell from the lips of the ejected ministers. These gatherings, or conventicles as they were called, were declared illegal, and bands of dragoons scoured the country breaking up these assemblies and haling the leaders to prison. Graham of Claverhouse especially signalised himself by his activity and cruelty in suppressing the conventicles. Between 1662 and 1678 no fewer than seventeen thousand persons suffered fine and imprisonment for attending the field-preachings. So dearly did the Covenanters

value these opportunities of worshipping God according to their consciences that some of them attended the conventicles fully armed, prepared to meet violence with violence. And thus it comes to pass that historians have to record a great victory of the Covenanters at Drumclog and an overwhelming defeat at Bothwell Bridge.

The conduct of this cruel campaign was, during a portion of these distressing times, in the hands of James, Duke of York, the brother of Charles, and afterwards James II. James was a Romanist, of the dark, narrow, besotted type, and the torture of the heroes of the Covenant was work after his own heart. But the rack and the thumb-screw, the boot and the stake, could not subdue the fierce, unquenchable zeal that burned in the hearts of the persecuted Presbyterians.

Many tender, romantic, soul-stirring tales have been narrated of these dark and glorious days. We can refer to but one of them here. Sir Patrick Hume, of Polwarth, a noted Covenanter, hid himself from the wrath of the Government and the cruelty of the godless dragoons in his family burial vault. Though suffering from the rigours of a Scottish winter, Sir Patrick could have no fire in his ghastly place of concealment. The

only light was afforded by a narrow slit in the wall of the tomb. When the darkness of night fell, his daughter Grizzel brought him food. His chief occupation and consolation in the gloomy sepulchre was the repetition of George Buchanan's translation of the Psalms into Latin. After many days Sir Patrick escaped to Holland, and returned to England with William of Orange, when that puissant prince came to restore our liberties.

With the accession of James to the throne the persecution was hotter than ever. Even the Declaration of Indulgence—an unconstitutional enactment, whose pretended object was the toleration of dissenters, but which was really designed to promote the domination of Romanists in the civil no less than in the ecclesiastical life of the nation—expressly excluded the field meetings from its favours. They were declared to be rendezvous of sedition, and the work of dragooning was continued with unabated zeal.

The vacant pulpits were, in general, filled by men of little learning and less character who did nothing to commend the new order of things to the people. Their constant cry was that the furnace of persecution might be heated seven times more. The Scots bishops distinguished themselves by their creeping,

slavish protestations of loyalty to the bad-hearted, hard-hearted persecutor. Their earnest prayer was that James might be given the hearts of his subjects and the necks of his enemies.

But the time of deliverance was at hand. Renwick, the last of the Covenanters, was executed in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh in February, 1688, William of Orange landed at Torbay in November, and before the end of the year James quitted England for ever. Presbyterianism was restored and the dove of peace returned "not to sojourn but to abide" in the land from which she had long been absent. There have been angry and bitter conflicts, many and oft, in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland since the Revolution of 1688, but from that time until this day no one within the realm has suffered death for professing the faith of his conscience.

1688

III

HOW THE GOSPEL WAS KEPT ALIVE IN SCOTLAND

FOR nearly a century and a half the religious life of Scotland had been maintained at a high pitch of excitement It was natural, when the cause which had produced the tension was withdrawn, that there should be the painful symptoms of re-action and exhaustion. The bow that had been kept taut so long snapped with a twang. The glowing enthusiasm, the fierce zeal, the passionate earnestness that had been the predominant characteristics of Scotland's religious history from the martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton to the martyrdom of James Renwick, were followed by an equally extended period, marked chiefly by indifference and cynicism. The fathers who seemed willing to die for a punctilio were succeeded by sons who did not consider

that anything was worth dying for, or even worth getting excited about. A profound distrust of enthusiasm entered many hearts. It almost seemed as if the temperature of Laodicea was regarded as the only wholesome one for mental and moral health. The philosophy of the even pulse became fashionable.

Soon after the Revolution of 1688 the Church of Scotland entered upon the dreary reign of the Moderates—as they called themselves—and continued under that deadening dominion, interrupted only by spasmodic insurrections, until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The two chief characteristics of this party were a rooted hostility, open or disguised, to evangelicalism, and the ready acceptance, sometimes proudly swelling into the glorification, of the State supremacy over the Church. If it had not been for the courage and fidelity to conscience of a few noble ministers who broke away from the Establishment to become the founders of energetic and fruitful dissenting bodies, the Gospel witness might have perished from the land, the people might have starved for the bread of life. The world and the secular historians have taken scanty note of the sacrifices offered by these valiant men

to the cause of truth; they have never rendered unto them the honour due to their names. The history of these great transactions was not dramatic enough to arrest the attention of outsiders; at any rate not dramatic enough to make a long-abiding impression upon the consciousness of the world.

We would not have it supposed that the Moderates were altogether destitute of claims to our respect and admiration. The term includes a great variety of character. Moderatism represents not so much a set of opinions as a type of temperament. Walter Scott, one of the noblest among the sons of men, was a Moderate. He lived a straight and honourable life; all his hope was in the Redeemer of mankind, but the question of his own single soul did not trouble him. We all know how little sympathy he had with the ecstasies and the agonies of religious enthusiasm; how in his heart he detested, distrusted, despised them. In Scott's opinion, the supreme good was that the blood should be kept cool, that the soul should pursue the even tenour of her way, and beware of excitement above all things. That is the very essence of the Moderate temperament, a temperament which

seeks to wave down evangelic urgency into a quiet, comfortable chair, to administer a narcotic to the Gospel.

In the ranks of the Moderates there was a wide range of character, from the good, easy, "natural" man who performed his routine duties without troubling himself to ascertain how far his creed and conscience accorded with the standards of the Church, to the genial pagan who did not even feign to believe in Christianity, whose whole life and thought were centred in the things of the world. The autobiography of "Jupiter" Carlyle, of Inveresk, is a perfect revelation of this class of men. They were not infrequently elegant scholars, possessing charming manners, and an extensive acquaintance with the whole range of fermented liquors. The theory and practice of conviviality was their favourite study. "They bore the scars of sportmen's battles on their glowing faces. The rich, coppery hue of many a reverend countenance had been got only by dint of long and persistent effort—by nightly touching and retouching, by the laying of tint on tint, by the determination never to throw away an opportunity of giving mellowness to the alcoholic colouring of years." Their equipment for the work of preaching has

been described by a living historian, who warmly admires and valorously defends them, as "a philosophical spirit which treated religion as only one phase of philosophical discussion, and which looked with some leniency, if not with actual sympathy, upon systems which inevitably assailed religious orthodoxy." The Gospel of Christ as "a phase of philosophical discussion"!

But to our story. The declension of the Church from the evangelical faith began almost at the very moment when her long fight for the Gospel and liberty of Christ had been crowned with victory. The first General Assemby after the Revolution showed itself too ready, in the opinion of the Covenanters, to compromise for the sake of peace and quietness. There was not enough iron in its blood. Only sixty of the 350 ministers who were ejected in 1662 remained to 1688, and many of the Episcopal incumbents—ignorant, lazy, and vicious—retained their benefices by conforming to the Presbyterian polity. The seeds of weakness and corruption were thus present in the Church from the beginning of this era, and they soon commenced to sprout. A creeping paralysis—to change the figure violently—began to steal over the body ecclesiastical.

In 1714, Professor Simson, of Glasgow, professed Arian principles, and asserted that he had the sympathy of the enlightened members of the Assembly. Professor Campbell, of St. Andrews, chivalrously came forward to defend the Apostles from the odious charge of enthusiasm! This champion of the Apostles denounced such expressions as "consulting the throne of grace" and "laying their matters before the Lord and imploring His light and direction." And yet the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in a careless moment no doubt, exhorted us to "come boldly to the throne of grace." And the Psalmist, feeling his need of direction, in a dark, mournful, weary hour, petitioned the God of Heaven to send out His light and truth. These professorial views of truth and of the Christian life were freely condoned by the latitudinarian Assembly.

1714

In strange contrast with this method of handling the professors was the angry, impatient, drastic treatment which was meted out to the Marrow-men. A copy of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, a compilation of Puritan theology made by one Fisher, a chaplain of the Parliamentary army, was carried into Scotland by one of Cromwell's brave, pious

old soldiers. A Scots country minister stumbled across it one day in the house of a parishioner, and, being greatly edified by the volume, prepared a new edition of it. The publication made an immediate and a profound impression. The doctrine of *The Marrow* became the staple preaching of many evangelical pulpits. The main principle contended for by the Marrow-men was that holiness was in no way the price or the condition of salvation—in other words, justification by faith. They sought to clear away the barriers which the preaching of mere ethics raised between the sinner and Christ. The Marrow-men may have been driven by the fury of controversy into unguarded statements, but the spirit and substance of their contention was right. It is summed up in the hymn :

"Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come."

The controversy must be viewed as illus-

trated by the well-understood principles and spirit of the men who were engaged in it on either side.

Ebenezer Erskine and his brother Ralph were the most prominent supporters of the Marrow theology — Ebenezer, a powerful, commanding, majestic preacher; Ralph quiet, mystical, and of a more humane temperament. The "new doctrines" were denounced by the Assembly, twelve Ministers were rebuked, and admonished at the bar of the House. The majority thought that they had shown great indulgence in not deposing their erring brethren. The Marrow-men submitted to the censure, but they had no intention of betraying their testimony.

A final breach with the Establishment was probably inevitable, but on what ground would the last battle of this civil war be fought? It is a commonplace that the immediate occasion of great upheavals is frequently but a fraction of the essential, underlying, potent causes. So was it in the great transaction we are about to relate. An earnest and energetic minority of the Church were deeply grieved and alarmed at the lax, latitudinarian spirit which dominated its councils, at the deadly languor which had crept into its veins, at the coma

under which it seemed to be passing away into death. It was not unlikely that these factors would sooner or later lead to a definite split. However, the immediate occasion of secession was a controversy concerning patronage, the law of the Church relating to the election of ministers.

In the beginning ministers in the Reformed Kirk of Scotland were appointed by the free choice of the parishioners. Then the election was given to the heritors or landowners subject to the people's right of objection. At the Revolution this right was confirmed; and the procedure, though the grave objections to it were not left without utterance, worked without conspicuous injury to the peace and welfare of the Church. But in 1713 a Tory Government, in direct violation of the terms of union between England and Scotland, surreptitiously hurried through a measure establishing lay patronage pure and simple. The landowners of Scotland were in general Tories, favourable to Episcopacy, and they would naturally fill the livings with men of kindred complexion, political and ecclesiastical. From these circumstances the Jacobites, who held office at the time, hoped great things for their cause. Their expectations perished like streams lost in the desert;

but they succeeded altogether outside their design in bringing disaster upon disaster to the Church of Scotland. At first the patrons exercised their new rights with caution, as inoffensively as could be ; soon, however, they gave great cause of complaint to the parishioners. Obnoxious ministers were forced upon the people in spite of their earnest protests, and in spite of a prescriptive understanding that a presentation could not take effect without their consent. The Assembly supported the patrons and by an enactment made in the year 1731 brought the crisis to a head. It was then ordained that, if the patron failed to present to the vacant living, the election should be made by the elders and heritors (or landholders). Ebenezer Erskine passionately protested against this Act. "What difference," he asked, "does a piece of land make between man and man in the affairs of Christ's kingdom?" The whole question of patronage was raised in this controversy. The Moderates maintained that patronage was a means of making the ministers independent of the mob. To the low view of Christ's family implied in this argument Erskine retorted that as it was the natural right of every house, or society of men, to have the

choice of its own servants, even more so was this the case in the House of God. He rightly denounced the new law as "giving a wound to the authority of Christ." The Assembly would have none of this; Erskine was condemned and suspended.

Without hesitation he "came out," and the first Associate Presbytery, consisting of Erskine and three other ministers, was formed at Gairney Bridge, near Kinross, on December 5, 1733. His brother Ralph witnessed the solemn inauguration of this new movement, but did not join it until 1737. The position of the seceders was indefinite; they were neither in the Establishment nor quite out of it. Attempts were made to win them back to the fold by the promise of solatium for the harsh treatment they had received. But Erskine perceived that between him and the Establishment there was a great gulf fixed. He pleaded the general corruption of the Church as an impossible barrier to his return. The removal of the patronage grievances would be merely the lancing of a boil on an unwholesome body. Far more drastic remedies were needed to restore sound health, and as the Church of Scotland did not purpose to submit itself to the physicians, Erskine and

1733.

his friends were formally deposed in 1740. His church at Stirling was closed against him; he was even turned out of the churchyard. And thus it came to pass that his first sermon as a free man was preached on the height just below the ramparts of the ancient castle of Stirling. From the rock above seven battlefields could be counted, and the place was not unfitting for the opening of a great spiritual campaign. Erskine "lifted up the banner of truth with a spirit unbound and free as the breeze that wafted the solemn accents of his message to the ears of the listening multitude."

This was the beginning of the Secession Church which has had a profound influence on the life and thought—and in no slight degree, on the literature also—of the Scottish nation. In the course of a few years Presbytery was added to Presbytery, and a supreme tribunal for the new communion was formed under the title of the Associate Synod.[1] A petty quarrel, which ought never to have assumed serious proportions and the significance of which has entirely vanished, led to a disruption, but the two sections were brought together, largely by their association in

[1] The denomination, however, was always popularly known as the Secession Church.

missionary work, and linked hands once again in 1820 as the United Associate Synod. The first meeting of this Synod was attended by 182 ministers and ninety-eight elders. Twenty years later the body numbered 400 congregations. In 1847 the Secession Church united with the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church which in 1900 joined itself with the Free Church to become the United Free Church. But this is anticipating many years.

The purpose of the series of which this little volume is a member requires that we should take special note of the beginning and growth of what is known as "the Voluntary principle" in the Secession Church. The conception will be more easily recognised by the readers of these lines under the name of the Liberation principle, the freeing of the Church of Christ from the support and control of the State. The Seceding Churches, being free and wholly dependent for their support on the free-will offerings of their congregations, were Voluntary Churches in practice; but at the beginning of their history they were not so in principle. The founders of the Secession Church accepted the Confession of Faith, the chief doctrinal standard of the Establishment that they had quitted, and,

besides, with very doubtful wisdom, they exalted the Covenants of 1638 and 1643 to a position of far greater importance than they enjoyed in the Church of Scotland. No attempt was made to revise these declarations of faith and practice in view of a condition of things very different from that which existed when they were first adopted.

Both in the Confession of Faith and in the Covenants there were statements wholly at variance with the Voluntary principle. The doctrine of the Confession with reference to the civil magistrate is stated in these words: "It is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed." This passage certainly means that it is the duty of the State to punish subjects on account of their religious opinions and observances. But the Confession is not consistent with itself in this matter. In another passage we find the golden statement that "God alone is the lord of conscience." When the compilers of the Confession wrote these true and noble words they were thinking

of their own consciences! It was only the consciences of other people that were in question, when the other passage, exhorting the civil magistrate to suppress heresies, was indicted!

The truth is that those who drew up the Confession were thinking merely of securing their own protection and predominance, and the discomfiture of their enemies. They had not enlightenment enough to rise to the height of a grand, wise maxim of Christian polity. For it is evident that their own statement, interpreted as a general principle, fully justifies the persecution to which the early Reformers and the Covenanters were subjected; for was not the State in both instances laudably employed in the zealous maintenance of unity and the vigorous suppression of what it considered blasphemies, heresies, corruptions, and abuses?

The doctrine of the Confession is in effect the principle of Mr. Gladstone's first book on Church and State which Macaulay so easily pulverised in the *Edinburgh Review*. The absurdities of it are many and palpable. The whole position falls to pieces as soon as we raise the question of who is to determine what truth is, what heresy is.

Early in its history the Secession Church

rejected the doctrine of the Confession concerning the civil magistrate. The State was warned to confine itself to its own secular functions, "without assuming any lordship over men's consciences or making any encroachment upon the special privileges or business of the Church." Thus was the seed of the Voluntary or Liberationist principle planted in the Church. The logic of fact and event greatly encouraged its growth. The hope of rejoining a purified Church of Scotland had a short and delicate life, and when that went down to the grave the principle of Establishment was buried with it. Each section of the split Secession Church proclaimed its testimony against compulsory measures in religion, and indeed as early as 1796 one of the Synods explicitly condemned the connection between Church and State. On their re-union in 1820 Voluntaryism formed part of the basis on which they came together, and the same principle entered into the constitution of the United Presbyterian Church formed in 1847 by the junction of the Secession and Relief Churches.

The story of the relation of the Secession Church to the Covenants is a curious and interesting study, which, however, we can deal with here only in a very cursory man-

ner. There are passages in both documents which war against the very essence of the Voluntary principle. The Covenants were not merely defensive instruments, they clearly contemplated the employment of force for the imposition of their doctrines upon the whole community. The fathers of the Secession made a grave error in their exaltation of these famous documents, actually at first going so far as to insist on their *perpetual* obligation, and making Covenanting a term of ministerial and Christian communion. Their mistake lay in not perceiving that the Covenants were designed to meet a pressing immediate need, that they had served their occasion, and that they should be set aside, not because they were bad, but because their usefulness was exhausted.

In the course of years the Covenants became a sore incubus. The Seceders found it a task of ever-increasing difficulty to adjust their relations with the documents to the palpable facts of their own situation. They first of all sought to rid themselves of the burden which they had strapped on their shoulders, by metaphysical quibbles about the *nature* of the obligation. "Oh, yes, the Church is under a perpetual obligation to maintain the Covenants, but as to the *nature*

of the obligation, that is not specified!" Finally, the Covenants were approved without the "physical force" clauses. "To enforce matters purely religious with civil pains is unwarrantable." "We do not vindicate the embodying of their (the Covenants') religious profession with the laws of the country and giving it the formal sanction of civil authority." When the two branches of the Secession Church were united Covenanting was made optional. The history of the matter, in a nutshell, is that the Covenants were first emasculated and then discarded.

Let us resume the consecutive narrative which this digression has interrupted. On page 57 we mentioned the Relief Church, which in 1847 linked itself with the Secession Church to form the United Presbyterian Church. The principle of its birth was the same as that which produced the Secession Church. In 1752, nineteen years after Erskine left the Establishment, Rev. Thomas Gillespie, a laborious, inoffensive, upright, humbly faithful man, came into collision with the General Assembly on the question of patronage. Gillespie was the leader of a majority of Dunfermline Presbytery who refused, on the ground of conscience, and in disobedience

1752

to the General Assembly, to induct to the parish of Inverkeithing a certain Mr. Richardson who, though he had been duly presented by the patron, was obnoxious to the people. Gillespie, a little, nimble man of austere appearance, a perfect picture of innocence and meekness, presented himself at the bar of the Assembly to receive the judgment of this High Court of the Church of Scotland. "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church," the dread sentence of deprivation was pronounced against him for vindicating the claims of Christ's people to their elementary rights! The House was greatly moved. Many members were pricked in their hearts when they realised what they had done.

Gillespie returned to his parish of Carnock and preached to immense multitudes in the open air. The sympathy for him among his own people was universal, and found other earnest voices even in far-distant parts. The famous Jonathan Edwards, of Boston, wrote: "If the truth were known it would appear that some of your most strenuous persecutors hate you much more for something else than they do for your not obeying the orders of the General Assembly." Edwards had hit the nail on the head. Gillespie was deposed

because he was an evangelical preacher. The patronage question was merely the immediate occasion of his expulsion from the ministry.

A year later Gillespie formed his supporters into a regular congregation. After standing alone for six years, during which time he had removed into the neighbouring town of Dunfermline, he was joined by Boston of Jedburgh, a son of the famous Thomas Boston, of Ettrick, the author of "The Fourfold State of Man," a very pious but a very terrific book. Gillespie had been converted under the elder Boston's faithful ministry. In 1761 the first Relief Presbytery, consisting of the churches at Dunfermline, Jedburgh, and Colinsburgh, was formed. The *raison d'être* of the new communion was "the relief of Christians oppressed in their Christian privileges." Presbytery was added to Presbytery until a Relief Synod was constituted. Then in 1847 came the amalgamation with the United Associate Synod as the United Presbyterian Church.

Two questions will occur to the reader with regard to the case of Gillespie. Erskine and Gillespie, with an interval of nearly twenty years between them, were expelled from the Church for practically the same

cause. Gillespie was twenty-five years of age when Erskine "came out," and thirty-two when the founder of the Secession was formally deposed. Should not Gillespie have been warned by the case of Erskine that there was no room for him in the Establishment? Knowing the law of the Church in the matter of patronage and the anti-popular sentiments of the majority, why did he enter the Church? All the answer we can give is that he may have hoped that after the secession of Erskine the Church would move more cautiously, and that the wrong and grievance of the law would by wise administration be reduced as far as possible.

The next question is—Why, having left the Church for the same reason as Erskine and his friends, did he not join himself unto them? Well, the year was 1752, and the first Associate Presbytery had been formed in 1733. By this time there was a distinct Seceder atmosphere and tradition, and Gillespie naturally sought his first supporters among his own people, who hitherto had lived in the tradition and atmosphere of the Church of Scotland. The Secession Church could not at this time have offered them a congenial home.

Note should be made of the heavy worldly

risks taken by the founders both of the Secession and the Relief Churches. They had but a vague notion of the amount of support that would be given to them by the people. Their fidelity carried with it the prospect of a much greater sacrifice than was involved in some later secessions, which glory has blazed abroad much more conspicuously. We now know to what noble heights the generosity of the Christian people can ascend; but in these days, though the average stipend of a minister was only £60, "the advantages of Establishment" seemed very real, and were highly rated. The glorious company of Disruption heroes did not face hazards so perilous as those that were encountered by Erskine, Gillespie, and their friends. The ministers who "came out" in 1843 knew that they could reckon upon enthusiastic support among great masses of the people, including many men of substance. The operation was directed by leaders whose sagacity, foresight, and statesmanship were as notable as their zeal, piety, and heroic spirit. In effect, their cause had triumphed before they made the final venture; Erskine and Gillespie had still to win their battle. The Free Church, formed in 1843, was like an infant born into a family well prepared for

its coming, and eager, so far as it could, to make provision for sustaining and rearing it. By its magnitude the Disruption movement compelled the attention of the world, and the world has not withheld its tribute of admiration. The humble writer of these lines was brought up in the fold of the Free Church; to it, under God, he owes his soul, and he would be the last to attempt to cast a shadow upon its glory. Without doubt, very great sacrifices were made—some of them life-long sacrifices. Let all these brave witnesses to the truth—Erskine, Gillespie, Chalmers, and their comrades—receive the honour due unto them.

As we have indicated, the services of the Secession and Relief Churches to the cause of Christ are not by any means to be measured merely by their sealed testimony to the right of the Christian people to choose their own pastors. They were the main custodians of the Gospel in their country during nearly three generations. They saved Scotland. The Established Church had sunk to the lowest and darkest deeps, and the preaching of the Gospel had all but ceased; a genial, convivial Paganism had usurped the authority of the law of Christ. But the Dissenters knew by Whom they had been ransomed; the

wormwood and the gall they could never forget; and, placing the royal diadem upon His pierced brow, they hailed Him Lord and Saviour and King.

IV

WHITEFIELD, WESLEY, AND THE HALDANES

THE evangelical revivals, of which the chief instruments were George Whitefield and John Wesley, made little difference in the organisation of Scotland's religious life—a few tabernacles and a very scanty sprinkling of Methodist churches; but their influence was nevertheless deep and beneficial. Revival work is at all times distinguished by the same characteristics. The same external features with which we are all nowadays so familiar appear and reappear; little that is fresh, surprising, or instructive can be said about them. The only edifying employment for language, when used concerning these exalted times of spiritual history, is in the expression of thankfulness to God for His great mercies. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow

of death, light is sprung up." We shall, however, endeavour to set down a few "picturesque notes" of Whitefield's and Wesley's campaigns in Scotland, and then seek to describe the nature of their influence on the religious life of the nation.

George Whitefield made his first visit to Scotland in 1741, when he was twenty-six years of age, a goodly man, fair-complexioned, with small, sprightly, dark blue eyes, a well-proportioned figure, a person neat and clean. He felt that in his work for the northern kingdom he might do something towards repaying his debt to Henry Scougal—a debt he was ever quick and generous to acknowledge. Scougal was born in 1650, and after holding a charge for a short time at Auchterless became, when only twenty-five, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen University. Three years later he died. Though brief, his career was very fruitful, for he was the author of a book entitled "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," the volume from which Whitefield derived the pivotal idea of his preaching. Scougal's great doctrine was that "true religion is a union of the soul with God, a real participation of the Divine nature, the very image of God drawn upon the soul, Christ formed within us."

1741

Ebenezer Erskine and his friends had the year before been deposed by the General Assembly of the Establishment, and the infant Associate Presbytery was eager to secure the help of the great evangelist. Whitefield heartily sympathised with the Secession movement. "I bless the Lord, from my soul," he says in a letter to Ralph Erskine, with whom he seems to have corresponded pretty freely at this time, "for raising you and several other burning and shining lights to appear for Him in the midnight of His Church." It is generally understood that it was from the perusal of the Erskines' sermons that Whitefield first imbibed the Calvinistic theology of which he afterwards took such deep draughts at the feet of Jonathan Edwards.

Whitefield, though he troubled himself little about denominational distinctions, was, of course, an ordained clergyman of the Church of England, and the Erskines insisted on Presbyterian government, exclusive of all other ways of worshipping God. The seed of inevitable disagreement lay there, and it soon sprang into vigorous life. The leaders of the Secession, having little understanding of the man with whom they had to deal, fondly imagined that, because Whitefield

came to Scotland at their invitation, he would readily consent to labour with and for them alone. "There is no face on earth," writes Ralph Erskine, "I would desire more earnestly to see. Yet I would desire it *only* in a way that, I think, would tend most to the advancing of our Lord's kingdom and the reformation work among *our* hands. Such is the situation of affairs among us, that unless you come with a design to meet and abide with us of 'the Associate Presbytery' I would *dread* the consequences of your coming, lest it should seem equally to countenance our persecutors." Whitefield replied, very properly, that if he came to Scotland it would be to preach the Gospel to all who were willing to hear him, of whatever denomination. He declared he could refuse no call to preach Christ, whoever gave it; were it a Jesuit priest or a Mahomedan, he would embrace it for testifying against them!

In August Whitefield met the Associate Presbytery at Dunfermline, and the issue was an open breach with the Seceders. He has left us a delightful description of this solemn gathering. The grave, venerable men proceeded to set the evangelist right about the matter of Church government. He told

them that they might save themselves the trouble. "Dear Mr. Erskine" pleaded with his brethren to have patience with Whitefield, born and bred in England, but a fiery zealot retorted that no indulgence was to be shown him, for England had revolted most with respect to Church government. He asked them why he was to preach only for them. "Mr. Ralph Erskine said, 'They were the Lord's people.' I then asked whether there were no other Lord's people but themselves? and, supposing all others were the devil's people, they certainly had more need to be preached to; and therefore I was more and more determined to go out into the highways and hedges; and that if the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Christ therein. Soon after this the company broke up." No wonder!

After the meeting of the Presbytery a sermon, obviously designed for the enlightenment of the dark Anglican mind, was preached in the church. Says Whitefield: "The good man so spent himself in the former part of his sermon, in talking against prelacy, the Common Prayer Book, the surplice, the rose in the hat, and such like externals, that when he came to the latter

part of his text, to invite poor sinners to Jesus Christ, his breath was so gone that he could scarce be heard. What a pity that the last was not first, and the first last!"

Whitefield retired to weep and pray. Then after preaching in the fields he dined with the Seceders and took a final leave of them—rejected and contemned by those good but misguided men. Whitefield, like Wesley after him, wisely refused to be entangled in the religious controversies of Scotland. Every man to his own work, and the great evangelist well understood the work that God had called him to do. If the Seceders would have none of him, many pulpits in the Establishment were open to his ministry—a point that should be carefully noted as bearing upon a time concerning which it is easy and justifiable to say hard things about the Church of Scotland.

The most vivid glimpses of Whitefield's work during his fourteen visits to Scotland are obtained from contemporary records, chiefly his own journals. At Edinburgh in 1741 he held a levée of wounded souls every morning, and afterwards at 7 a.m. preached in the fields to congregations composed not only of the common folk, but also persons of

high rank. For three hours before noon he conferred with people under distress. He wielded an extraordinary influence over young people, even boys and girls. "One of the mistresses told me that she is now awakened in the morning by the voice of prayer and praise, and the master of the boys says that they meet together every night to sing and pray, and that when he goes to their rooms to see if all be safe, he generally disturbs them at their devotions." Religious conversation became so fashionable that it banished slander and calumny from several tea-tables.

1742 was for a long time memorable in Scotland as the year of the great Cambuslang revival. Cambuslang is a busy place, of modest dimensions, not far from Glasgow. Whitefield's services here made an impression which travelled to the uttermost parts of Scotland. "For an hour and a half," says Whitefield, describing one of these momentous gatherings, "there was much weeping, and so many falling into such deep distress as cannot be described. The people seemed to be slain in scores. Their agonies and cries were exceedingly affecting." Again, "thousands were bathed in tears — some wringing their hands, others almost swooning

and others crying out, and mourning for a pierced Saviour." Whitefield estimates that one of these tremendous throngs consisted of between 30,000 and 40,000 people. In all likelihood, the figures are greatly exaggerated, for the attendance at popular demonstrations is invariably over-estimated by sympathetic observers, and a recent careful scientific numbering of a very successful assembly in Hyde Park gave abundant reason for believing that the calculations of the dimensions of these gatherings have shot far beyond the mark. But Whitefield's were undoubtedly the best-attended field-preachings that Scotland has ever known.

The Seceders regarded the Cambuslang work with grave disfavour. The churches of the young denomination were enjoined to observe a day of fast and humiliation for the countenance given to Whitefield, and for "the symptoms of delusion attending the present awful work upon the bodies and spirits of men going on at Cambuslang." It is sad and painful to have to record that Erskine and his friends regarded the Cambuslang revival as the work of the Evil One. The Seceders did not perceive that they were bringing the same charge against Whitefield that the Pharisees levelled against his Master: "This fellow

doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the Prince of the devils;" and Whitefield might justly have retorted: "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Sadly, but without bitterness, did the great evangelist receive this cruel and shameful treatment. "To what lengths," he pondered and prayed, full of sorrow, "may prejudice carry even good men! From giving way to the first risings of bigotry and party spirit, good Lord, deliver us!"

Dr. Webster, of Edinburgh, the leader of the evangelical party in the Established Church, took it upon himself to rebuke the Seceders for their narrowness and uncharitableness. Webster was nicknamed "Magnum Bonum," a sobriquet that he had fully earned by his tender, touching, unswerving devotion to the claret-bottle. He was in great request as the spiritual adviser of elderly dames; he consoled their dying hours, and was rewarded in their wills. How impressive, then, must it have been to see good old Magnum Bonum, rising from his seat in the Assembly, and, with tears in his voice, proceeding to remark, in his best bedside

manner, that the dissension between these good men—George Whitefield and Ebenezer Erskine—made him long for a removal to the land of visions above, where are no wranglings, &c., &c. Magnum Bonum and the land of visions above! Shade of Pecksniff!

Whitefield made many visits to Scotland after the Cambuslang revival, but his work henceforth, though not, it seems, less fruitful, was done in more normal and probably more healthy conditions. He was greatly delighted that so many people brought their Bibles with them when they came to hear him, and turned to every passage that he expounded. A very unusual consequence followed a sermon of Whitefield's at Glasgow. He declaimed warmly against a play-house that was being erected in the vicinity. Before his departure from the city workmen were employed to take the building down to prevent this being accomplished by ruder hands. The generality of the Scottish people—not of course excluding persons professedly religious — always entertained a genuine respect for Whitefield. Two months after the apostle's death, Foote, the actor, visited Edinburgh, and thought to entertain the most critical of audiences by imitating Whitefield's appearance and manner of speaking. Ex-

quisite mimic as he was, he was given good reason to remember this adventure. The theatre was emptied after the first night.

John Wesley's first visit to Scotland was in 1751, ten years after Whitefield had entered the northern kingdom. By this time the theological divisions between the two apostles had attained their final and lasting emphasis. John Wesley from the first perceived that the Scots liked plain speaking and faithful dealing. He never spared them. Early in his Scottish pilgrimage he noted that the people were more open to debate than to suffer exhortation. He offered them a piece of advice that was very disagreeable to the Scots temperament: they were not to talk, as was their wont, on some head of religion, but to examine each other's hearts and lives.

The appropriate comment on the first part of this counsel is supplied by the chapter on "The Scot in Argument" in Ian Maclaren's "His Majesty Baby." A farmer who, obviously, has dined, is returning home in the train with a minister as his fellow-passenger. Soon the two are engaged in a hot argument on the question of justification—by faith or by works. The farmer, with a magnificent disregard of personal convenience, takes up the side of works. The discussion

is only ended by the arrival of the train at the farmer's destination. The last scene shows the champion of works, leaning against a pillar on the station platform, and declaiming to the train as it carries away the other disputant: "I grant ye Paul and the Romans, but I take my stand on James!"

Wesley always received kind treatment at the hands of the Scottish people, even during those years when his work in England was not carried on without grave peril of limb and life. Only on one occasion was violence offered—at the Castle Gate, Aberdeen, when a loon threw a potato at the great evangelist. The inexpensive missile fell harmless from Wesley's arm to the ground. Doubtless it was picked up again, to be applied to its natural use. The reticence and the apparent insensibility of the Scots, even under the application of the most vigorous stimulation, puzzled and irritated Wesley. "I am amazed at this people," he wrote; "use the most cutting words, and apply them in the most pointed way, still they hear but feel no more than the seats they sit upon." Nevertheless he was constrained to admit that the Scots were the best hearers in Europe, a pattern to all mankind.

The chief impediment to the success of

Wesley's work in Scotland was his strong and noted repugnance to the Calvinistic theology and the unrelenting hostility of those who held that system of doctrine to those who had other views of Christian truth. Whitefield had greatly commended himself to his northern hearers by his fidelity to their traditional theology. Dr. John Erskine, who had been a friend and helper of Whitefield, and who was a leader of the Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, attacked Wesley with the violence which was at that time characteristic of religious controversy. Wesley, he said, had blended with "some precious Gospel truths a medley of Arminian, Antinomian, and enthusiastic errors." The evangelist kept himself to his proper work of calling sinners to repentance and edifying saints; he refused to be immeshed in the niceties of metaphysical theology; but he could not disguise from himself the harm that had been inflicted on the Gospel by such disputations, and he greatly grieved over it. A friendly interview between Erskine and Wesley did nothing to remove the rock of offence, and the latter came away sadly, feeling that he loved and reverenced Erskine, but detested his doctrine.

That Methodism as an organisation took

such slight hold on Scotland was due mainly—apart from an innate hostility to the exaggerations which seem to belong to the Methodist temperament—to the deep and unalterable dislike of the Scots to several features in its ecclesiastical polity. The people never took kindly to the itineracy. They believed in a settled ministry and not in a strolling pastorate. The state of feeling in this matter was explained to Wesley, again and yet again, but his reply was always, in effect, "You may like the itineracy or you may not; you may take it or leave it. It is the system I have adopted and approve, and it shall not be altered while I live."

Wesley was an autocrat, a benevolent despot, if you will; but he ruled his "societies" with a hand of iron; no one dare say him nay. Now, the Scots simply will not suffer despotism in the government of the Church. The Presbyterian polity—with its kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and Assembly—is formal, elaborate, sometimes tedious, but it is democratic from foundation to coping-stone, a marvellous combination of order and dignity with popular rights.

Wesley had but small understanding of this temperament, he had no sympathy with

it, and he was not in the least disposed to make concessions to it. With scarcely concealed contempt and impatience he describes the proceedings of the General Assembly in 1764. For five hours the House debated whether a certain Mr. Lindsay should be removed to Kilmarnock parish. The argument for his transference was that he had a large family and that the living was twice as good as that attached to his present charge. On the other side, it was stated that the Kilmarnock people were resolved not to hear Mr. Lindsay, and in the event of his appointment would leave the Kirk. "If," says the calm, sagacious, decisive little man who organised Methodism—"if the real point in view had been, as their laws direct, 'the greater good of the Church,' instead of taking five hours the debate might have been determined in five minutes."

1764

Wesley, then, would have nothing to do with the Presbyterian system of Church government. One of his Glasgow preachers actually dared to set up a kirk-session of elders to assist him in the supervision of the congregation. That was surely a small and timid step towards Presbyterianism, but it was enough to excite the hot wrath of Wesley. Lo and behold, the masterful little

man was down upon the unfortunate preacher like a hurricane of bricks. "I require you, Jonathan Crowther, immediately to dissolve that session (so called). Discharge them from meeting any more. And if they will leave the Society let them leave it. If the people of Glasgow are weary of us, we will leave them to themselves. But we are willing to be still their servants, for Christ's sake, according to our discipline, but no other." There is a touch of irony in the undoubted fact that the polity of the Methodist Churches in the present day is identical in spirit with Presbyterianism. The great, fruitful, divine conception common to both is the connexional idea, the *nexus*, a mighty chain running through quarterly meeting or Presbytery, district meeting or Synod, up to Conference or Assembly, linking the humblest member of the village church with the supreme tribunal of the denomination.

Though Scotland's debt to Whitefield and Wesley is incalculable, it is not difficult to specify its nature. Here were masses of people in whose eyes earnest religion, or deep feeling of any sort, was a thing to be contemned, shunned, distrusted. The flame of godliness was kept alive by sectaries whose thoughts, by force of fate and circumstance,

were occupied largely with patronage, the Covenants, questions of heterodoxy, and the like, and among whom faith was in danger of sinking to a mere acquiescence in certain statements of fact and opinion. Suddenly there appeared in the midst of this too self-contained, somewhat blear-eyed generation, the dust of whose controversies had almost hidden the face of the Saviour, two men whose souls had been set on fire at the altar of the Holy Ghost, who cared nothing and less than nothing for Presbytery, patronage, and the Covenants, who called men in accents, clear, thrilling, unmistakeable to repentance, faith, and godliness, who made direct, piercing appeals to the conscience, who demanded that men should decide immediately on whose side they would stand, God's side or the Devil's, who represented religion, not as an exercise in dialectics, but as a union of the soul with God, who held up Christ to the people as the giver of eternal life, the Redeemer of the will from the guilt and the power of sin. Such preaching was a vital supplement to intellectual discussions on the minutiæ of creeds and systems of Church government, discussions which only indirectly and as by accident contributed to the salvation and edification of souls.

Whitefield was a Calvinist, and Wesley an Arminian—terms which are vague nicknames rather than valid descriptions; but they both excluded points of controversial theology from their preaching: their business was to offer a free salvation to all men, and to paint the awful perils of refusing this great gift of God. Their styles of oratory were as far apart as their temperaments—Whitefield's emotional and dramatic, Wesley's calm, clear, logical, and deliberate; their common characteristic was that they were sincere and earnest; those who heard them knew that they were listening to fully accredited ambassadors of God. Many "were pricked in their heart" and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Fear came upon their souls; wonders and signs were done by the apostles, and the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved. Wesley and Whitefield, in living epistles scattered all over the country, from the Solway Firth to the Shetland Isles, contributed some notable new chapters to the Acts of the Apostles.

Physicians, when dealing with patients who are suffering from a general lethargy of the organs, apply remedies which give the system a good shaking-up. I am not sure that that is not the best description of what these

skilful physicians of the soul, Wesley and Whitefield, did for Scotland—they administered a good shaking-up. The effects of this mode of treatment were beneficial and lasting ; and the patient was duly grateful. The great evangelists were treated with kindness, respect, and reverence, and they were not slow to acknowledge the courtesy, patience, and ready welcome with which they and their message were received. True, they made no considerable immediate impression upon the traditional theology. The orthodox evangelicals continued, for nearly two generations after Wesley's death, to be strongly attached to the Calvinistic doctrines, although in popular preaching the rigour of this stern creed was softened somewhat, and the emphasis placed on the varied aspects of God's truth was more justly proportioned. The lasting value of the service that Whitefield and Wesley rendered to Scotland lay in this —that they entirely transformed the religious *feeling* of the country, they kindled a hot, glowing passion for souls which has never died out.

The indirect results, in which Scotland had her share, of the great evangelical revival are palpable in the present day. From it sprang those great missionary, social, and philan-

thropic activities which have saved our country and are altering the face of the world. The abolition of the slave trade, the reform of a barbarous criminal code, the cleansing of prisons from their former character as anterooms of hell, the erection of hospitals for the sick, an increased care for the poor and the oppressed, the cold, the hungry, the naked—in a word, the birth of the humane spirit which has attained such strength and vigour in our day—these are but a few of the many blessings which the world owes to the revival evangelists of the despised eighteenth century.

The French Revolution stirred all men's hearts. Many ardent, ingenuous souls wel-
1789. comed it as the dawn of a warmer, brighter day for this poor world, when the shackles with which priests and kings had bound the bodies and souls of men should be broken for ever. Among those who were swept along on the great tidal wave of enthusiasm for humanity was Robert Haldane (1764–1842), a comfortable, respectable, young country gentleman, living on his beautiful estate at Airthrie, near Stirling, and occupied with the customary pursuits of his order. Thither God came to him in the person of Jesus Christ and took complete possession

of his heart. He sold his estate and prepared to set out to the East Indies, with his wife and daughter, there to spend his life in the service of the Gospel. But the East India Company refused its permission.

Immediately, the consecrated energies of Robert Haldane were turned in another direction, for he was one of those who gather heat by the roughness of the road over which they travel, whose spirits rise with opposition. He hired the Edinburgh Circus, induced Rowland Hill to preach the opening sermon, and thereafter continued to conduct successful evangelistic services to overflowing congregations. Presently being joined by his brother James (1768–1851), and calling to his side a band of lay preachers, Robert Haldane organised a great evangelistic tour in the East and North of Scotland. A small company of these zealous men, whose qualifications for their work consisted chiefly of the gift of speech, and an experience of the life of God in their own souls, would enter a sleepy little Scots town, and would wake up the people by preaching each evening in the market-place "by tuck of drum." On Sunday mornings they would attend the parish church, and if—which was very likely—they considered that the sermon was tainted with

heresy and empty of sound, saving doctrine, they would point out the errors of the clergyman at their open-air service in the evening and seek to feed the people with the sincere milk of the Word. These humble preachers gathered immense audiences, and soon the whole country-side was in a blaze. The "regular ministry" tried to crush the Haldaneites. It was the time of Pitt and Eldon, when Toryism was particularly stupid and cruel; and it occurred to the Established Church that the best way to repress the obnoxious ranters was to allege their "notorious disaffection to the civil constitution of the country" and demand their punishment by legal pains and penalties. But the device was too transparent, and the good work went on.

The impetus of the movement was arrested when, James Haldane becoming a Baptist, the followers of Robert established the Scottish Congregational Union; and the Haldaneites were definitively split into two camps. Both brothers lived many years after the eddies produced by their stirring up of the sluggish ecclesiastical waters had faded quite away. The revival campaigns became a "long, dim faded retrospect" of glorious years. But the brothers continued to be fruitful in Christian activity to the end. Robert wrote an "Ex-

position of the Epistle to the Romans," which Thomas Chalmers praised as a well-built commentary, containing solid and congenial food. When Dr. John Brown, on the ground of conscience, refused to pay the Annuity Tax for the support of the Edinburgh ministers of the Established Church, Robert Haldane, in a letter, of which 14,000 copies were circulated, denounced his conduct as rebellion against Christ. These were the days before the Disruption; and Dr. Chalmers, a fanatical believer in "the national recognition of religion," declared that Haldane had by this letter laid both Church and State under a deep and lasting obligation.

1833.

Haldane was a tall, commanding man with little black piercing eyes, and an altogether appalling strength of nerve and character. During his last illness, even after his doctor had told him that the hour of his departure was at hand, his hair was as carefully powdered every day as when he was in health, and he showed the same attention to personal neatness as had always characterised him. His conversation was not merely serene, but cheerful, vivacious, amusing, full of anecdote. In his seventy-ninth year he faced the last enemy with dauntless assurance and triumphantly over-

came him. Nine years later, in 1851, his brother James followed him into rest.

I have mentioned that the Scottish Congregational Union owed its origin to the Haldaneites who differed from brother James on the question of baptism. It was about this time that Congregational and Baptist principles in Scotland began to be clothed in something like vigorous, organised life. The leader of the Glasgow Independents was David Dale, and a Church with twenty members was formed in 1770. The populace applied the contemptuous term of Candle Kirk to the meeting-house, for the chief instrument of its erection was a tallow-chandler. Dale amassed great wealth as a banker and cotton-spinner, became Provost of Glasgow, and a tower of strength to Independency in the West of Scotland.

As for the Baptists, Robert Chambers notes their first appearance in Scotland in 1652 when several persons, "both men and women of good rank," were immersed at Bonnington Mill, near Edinburgh. The increase of the denomination seems to have been quite sporadic. Over a hundred years later we find Sir William Sinclair, a Caithness-shire baronet and a supporter of the Baptist tenets, immersing a few of his retainers who had espoused

the faith of their master. The horror there must have been all over the Highlands wherever the report of this impious act penetrated! In 1765 Robert Carmichael, who had been a Presbyterian minister, travelled to London to receive the ordinance at the hands of Dr. Gill, a predecessor of C. H. Spurgeon in the pastorate of New Park Street Chapel. Carmichael on his return baptised Archibald McLean, and they became joint pastors of a Baptist Church in Edinburgh. In 1769 baptisms in the Clyde were witnessed by thousands of people assembled on Glasgow Green. Though Scots Baptists and Congregationalists have been in numbers but a feeble folk, the country has need of them, and their influence has been considerable. The doctrines of grace and the principles of religious liberty have been safe in their hands.

V

THOMAS CHALMERS AND THE DISRUPTION

IN the closing years of the eighteenth century the icy fingers of Moderatism began to relax their grip on the souls of men. In the darkest times of the Church of Scotland evangelical truth had not been without its witnesses and confessors. Of those who in those days bore the flaming torch of the Gospel, the most conspicuous was Dr. John Erskine, the friend of Whitefield, the protagonist of Wesley. A zeal for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen was painfully coming to birth in the Establishment, a sure sign of reviving faith; and several Presbyterians petitioned the General Assembly to prepare a scheme of foreign missions. The subject came before the House in 1796. The Moderates denounced the project as highly preposterous, romantic and visionary, dan-

gerous to society. This is not at all surprising. Those who had no Gospel to preach at home could have no Gospel to take to the heathen. Dr. Erskine was moved to deepest indignation by the language of the Moderates. "Pass me that Bible," said he to the president of the Assembly, and, having received the volume, he read passage after passage proving the duty of the Church to preach the salvation of God in every part of the world. The division resulted in a victory for the enemies of the Gospel by fifty-eight votes to fifty-four; but the debate and the figures showed that the Evangelicals were gaining ground, and that the day of triumph might not be distant.

1796

A quarter of a century later the leadership of the Evangelicals within the Church of Scotland had passed into the hands of Thomas Chalmers—with the exception of John Knox the most commanding figure in the religious history of Scotland. A full and true estimate of Chalmers, which will be both sympathetic and impartial, is yet to be written. It will be the work of some noble soul, probably an outsider to the ecclesiastical life of Scotland, possessing knowledge, discernment, tenderness, and love. "To found a great organisation," says Augustine Birrell,

"is to build your tomb—a splendid tomb it may be, a veritable sarcophagus, but none the less a tomb." The personality of Chalmers, so vigorous and so vivid in his day, so expansive that it seemed to fill the sky, is at the present time somewhat submerged under the weight of the massive and splendid organisation of which he was the chief creator. The views of his life and character, when they have been friendly, have been, for the most part, of the conventional, obituary-notice type. Yet he was as far removed as possible from being a plaster saint; in his character there was not wanting the "flavour of the good brown earth," without which, it has been said, it is impossible to attain unto real holiness. He was without doubt a great man, of a greatness to which few figures in the whole history of our country can approach; a man of "warrior grandeur, one of Nature's nobles"; a great orator, a great statesman, a great Christian.

Chalmers in his personal history embodied the transition from Moderatism to evangelicalism, the passing from death unto life. He was born in 1780, entered the ministry in 1803, and for eight years thereafter was a member of the then dominant party. But in his nature there was no taint of the indolence

from which many Moderates suffered; he was possessed with a demon of restless energy. Indeed, he confessed and lamented, in a moment of morbid introspection, that his labours too often sprang from a mere principle of animal activity. The staple of his early preaching was that we should exert all our best endeavours to live virtuously, not being discouraged by slow progress in holiness, and trusting in the atonement and propitiation of Jesus to supply all the deficiencies of our imperfect obedience. That is a modified form of the heresy of salvation by works which—however it may be with the pulpit—still enjoys some favour with the pew. In these unregenerate days Chalmers was full of contempt for the cant and nauseating fanaticism of enthusiasm; he regarded attachment to the evangelical faith as a sure sign of mental imbecility. Undue vehemence of language was a characteristic of this great man's utterances to the end of his days.

The event that Chalmers always regarded as his conversion came to pass in his thirty-second year. A serious illness overtook him; he suffered the kind, cruel pangs of bereavement, and he was led to read Wilberforce's tractate on Practical Christianity. The result of these operations, inspired, directed,

and crowned by the Holy Spirit, was that he became another man. Old things had passed away, all things had become new. Henceforth Thomas Chalmers was a clear, steady, glowing fire of Gospel passion, at which many hearts warmed themselves.

1811

The Evangelicals, no less than the Moderates, were warmly attached to the principle of Establishment. It was not within their purview that the time would come when they would be asked to make more sacrifices for it than their allegiance to Christ would permit. Chalmers signalised himself by the violent expressions he employed towards the Voluntaries. When Dr. John Brown and some others refused to pay the annuity tax for the support of the Edinburgh ministers, Chalmers denounced "the burning shame of the transaction."

At the summit of his renown, in the spring of 1838, when the patronage controversy, which was to issue in the Disruption, was at its hottest, he delivered a series of lectures at the Hanover Square Rooms, London, in favour of Establishments. These meetings were attended by a Royal duke—the Duke of Cambridge, the only son of George III., who never caused his father a sigh—and by mar-

quises, earls, viscounts, baronets, and M.P.'s galore. At the last lecture nine prelates graced the occasion. The Duke of Cambridge sat in the front row and kept "incessantly bobbing" his assent. What the nine prelates thought and said is not on record. Chalmers dealt faithfully with the high pretensions of the Anglican Church. He chased the doctrine of Apostolical Succession up hill and down dale, and finally smote it to the ground. But, truth to tell, if any one wishes to understand the severe limits of Chalmers's powers as a thinker he has but to read these extraordinary lectures. Mr. Gladstone, who heard them, and who was in full sympathy with the main thesis of the speaker, said that Chalmers had no idea what was the matter at issue; and Mr. Gladstone was right. The great orator had but the smallest capacity for abstract thought.

These famous lectures never come near the root of the matter. They are full of the most splendid rhetoric and the most amazing absurdities. He advises the Anglican Church to discard Apostolical Succession, just for all the world as if that doctrine were a garment. In that case the English evangelical Dissenters are advised to sink all their objections to Episcopacy and enter the fold of

the National Church. The great fundamental principles which it was the orator's business to prove are taken for granted. He never suspects for a moment that Parliament may not be the most competent body in the world, both intellectually and morally, to select the religion entitled to the exclusive support of the State. Roman Catholicism is of course out of the question, for the lecturer cannot imagine a more testing evidence of an incompetent and vulgarised Parliament than that it should not be qualified to decide between the merits of Protestantism and Popery! Any person with the ordinary schooling of a gentleman should be competent, after a few weeks' reading, to decide between the authority of the Bible and the authority of Rome's Apostate Church!! Chalmers's conception of the arrangement between the Church and State is that of a one-sided bargain. It is the duty of the State to maintain the Church, but the Church must retain her absolute spiritual supremacy—that must never be surrendered.

Chalmers was a master of rhetoric, he had his share of the defects which belong to the rhetorical temperament, he was sometimes the dupe of his own eloquence. The idea of "the national recognition of religion" had

a fatal fascination for him—as if the State could have religion apart from the faith of those who composed it. He did not see that if Parliament is to give its favour to one particular Church, that Church must profess the creed of the majority of the people—whether a true or a false creed is utterly beside the point; for who is more competent to decide this question than the people from whom the State derives its authority and power? Nor did he perceive that this fundamental principle led to either of two conclusions, both of which he would have rejected—that the Church of England should be established in Scotland as well as in England and Ireland or that the Roman Catholic Church should be established in Ireland. Chalmers could not see his subject clearly through the golden clouds of rhetoric, of his own creation, in which he had wrapped it up.

The Voluntaries came in for a liberal quantity of violent abuse in these remarkable discourses. They were described as incendiaries and scolded for being "far more mischievous, but hardly more intelligent than the machine-breakers of Kent, the frame-breakers of Leicestershire." They wanted to burn up the synagogues of God in the land,

they were prepared to welcome with shouts of exultation the overthrow of those altars which in holier and better times upheld the faith and devotion of our forefathers ; and so on—the kind of language with which Church Defence orators continue to "deive us to death" even unto the present day. Chalmers seems to have been singularly free from personal bitterness, the acridity of his language proceeds from the fact that his gift of speech included the faculty of hearty vituperation. It is significant to note that in his diary for 1822 he writes : "I fear that my manner is greatly too intolerant. Let me guard against it. O, let not flesh have dominion over me."

We have noticed this side of Chalmers's activity at what may seem a disproportionate length, because of its personal and historic interest. It illustrates the temper of a great man's mind, and it indicates how terrible must have been the wrench of the subsequent separation from the Establishment, how mighty must have been the power of the principles which led to that consummation. The early history of the Free Church showed how quickly the stress of events will drive men away from abstract principles which they have hitherto held with

great tenacity. The fathers of the Free Church professed the Establishment principle, but the hope of returning to a purified Establishment soon perished, and the majority of the Free Church, as was inevitable, became Voluntaries in theory as they were in practice. It is not in the nature of men to go on believing, as an article of religious faith, in the establishment of religion when the communion which enjoys that favour is one to which their consciences will not allow them to belong.

We now proceed with pleasure to narrate the events which constitute one of the great heroic periods in the history of Scotland. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century the old troubles about patronage again reached an acute stage. On the nomination of patrons ministers were again being *intruded* upon congregations to whom they were obnoxious. Unhappy scenes not infrequently accompanied the perpetration of these wrongs. The parishioners sometimes barricaded the church door and refused to admit nominee or Presbytery. At other times, possessed by a sense of mischievous humour, they waylaid the individual members of the Presbytery and bore them away from the scene of the ordination. Then

when the nominee of the patron arrived he found himself in sole possession of the church, but with no Presbytery present to ordain him. In these circumstances the help of the military was sometimes requisitioned, and then was seen the sad and painful spectacle of a minister being set over a congregation at the point of the bayonet.

The supine Moderates did not trouble themselves much about these scandals, but they were a sore grief to the Evangelicals. The influence, authority, and strength of the Establishment was being drained away by these continually repeated intrusions. In the course of fifty years two hundred Dissenting churches were built and more than one hundred thousand people withdrew their allegiance from the Church of Scotland. The situation was precisely similar to that which had arisen in the days of Erskine and Gillespie, but in the meantime the feeling of the Church towards the matter had altered. Presbytery after Presbytery brought the question before the Assembly, various expedients were discussed, and the first definite step was taken when in 1833 the Veto Act was introduced. The Assembly rejected this proposal by a majority of twelve. In the following year, however,

having been debated throughout the whole Church in the meantime, it was carried by a plurality of forty-six votes. This famous Act of Assembly provided that when a majority of the male heads of families, being communicants, came forward and formally objected to the induction of a particular minister, that induction should not take place. The passage of this Act meant that the majority of the Church had become converted to the views for maintaining which they had deposed the Erskines in 1740 and Gillespie in 1752.

1834

The Veto Act was not by any means a recognition of the right of a congregation to choose its own pastor, nor indeed did Chalmers believe that any such right existed. He was an old Tory, he had opposed the extension of the political franchise granted by the Reform Act of 1832, and he was not disposed to be more liberal in ecclesiastical than in secular politics. He was fond of proclaiming his perfect independence of "the conceits, the follies, the wayward extravagance, the humours of the populace," and he professed contempt for "the village demagogues who love to breathe in the element of parochial effervescence." Though his heart was full of an honest, tender,

fatherly love for the poor, there were marked limits to the trust he was prepared to place in them. There was pungency, and an effective modicum of truth, in the criticism of a leading Dissenter that the Veto Act refused to the people the power of choosing their own ministers, but granted them the power of quarrelling with their patrons.

It had yet to be decided whether the Veto Act, such as it was, conflicted with the civil law of the realm. A test case soon arrived. A certain Mr. Young was presented by the Earl of Kinnoull to the living of Auchterarder. After the presentation came, in due process of law, the signing of the "call" by the congregation. Only two persons out of a parish of 3,000 souls appended their names to this document, and 287 out of 300 male heads of families protested against the induction of Mr. Young. In accordance with the Veto Act, the Presbytery rejected the nomination. Mr. Young appealed to the Court of Session, the highest tribunal in Scotland. The case, as one of immense importance, was tried before all the judges. By eight votes to five they decided that the Presbytery had exceeded their powers in rejecting Mr. Young on the ground of the people's objection to him—in other words,

that the Veto Act was illegal and must be treated as null and void. This judgment created the greatest consternation throughout the Church. The Presbytery carried the case to the House of Lords, and the supreme tribunal of the realm upheld the decision of the Court of Session. The Lords declared that the Presbyteries were bound to "receive and admit whatsoever qualified minister was presented by the Crown or by lay patrons."

In the course of these proceedings it was made manifest that the judicatures of the country denied to the Church of Scotland any jurisdiction whatever except such as it derived from the civil magistrate. One judge very pertinently inquired, what was an Establishment if it was not a Church which owed its powers and position to Parliament and the law?

The attitude of the State to the Church of Scotland was still more clearly defined by two other cases which came before the Courts. The minister who was presented by the patron to the parish of Lethendy was obnoxious to the people, and the Presbytery refused to induct him. Thereupon the patron presented another nominee. But the first nominee obtained an injunction from the Court of Session against the

ordination of the second nominee. The Presbytery disregarded this injunction, was summoned to appear before the Civil Court, severely rebuked, and threatened on a repetition of the offence with imprisonment.

A still more remarkable and complicated state of affairs came to pass in the Presbytery of Strathbogie. This Presbytery, choosing to obey the judges rather than the General Assembly, made arrangements for inducting to the parish of Marnock a minister whose services the people declined. The Assembly suspended the seven ministers of the Presbytery and appointed others to fill the vacant pulpits. The Court of Session said, nay. It maintained the seven ministers in the occupation of their charges and denied the use of the pulpits to the ministers appointed by the Assembly. Open-air services, attended by great throngs of excited people, were the result, and the whole countryside was in a ferment. The Court, surely straining its powers to the breaking-point, forbade the ministers sent by the Assembly to preach. The Assembly indignantly denounced and rightly disregarded this monstrous decree. And then the obnoxious nominee was ordained by the seven suspended ministers, who were clearly incompetent, by the acknow-

ledged law of the Church, to perform such a function. The seven recalcitrants had no sooner been solemnly deposed at the next meeting of the Assembly than a messenger-at-arms from the Court of Session demanded admission to the House and presented an injunction against the deposition.

These proceedings were not difficult to interpret. If unchallenged, they meant the extinction of the spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland. Patronage was now a subsidiary issue, an accident of the case. The deepest passions of Chalmers were engaged in this most momentous conflict. His conscience could not enjoy a moment of comfort in an Establishment whose spiritual rights were only exercised by the sufferance of the civil magistrate and in subjection to his dictates. The High Court of Parliament must be asked to do its duty. It was not enough that the sanction of the Legislature should be given to the law of the Church. Such a measure would be implicitly an assertion that the civil tribunals had jurisdiction over the ecclesiastical courts. The contention of the Church was an absolute denial that any such superiority existed. On the contrary, it was maintained that the Church, in the exercise of her spiritual jurisdiction

was above the law. The Legislature, therefore, must be called upon to declare that the civil courts had exceeded their powers, that they misunderstood the terms of the alliance between Church and State, that the Church possessed rights which she owed to her Lord alone, that as the State had not given them neither could she take them away.

It must be admitted that this was a position difficult for a statesman of any party even to understand, much less to accept. The idea of an Establishment, except as an institution whose jurisdiction was subordinate to the power which sustained it in its position of exceptional advantage, was incomprehensible to Englishmen.

It is not surprising, therefore, that neither of the two great parties showed any keen desire to yield to pretensions considered unnatural and extravagant. At the beginning of these troubles the Whigs were in power. Chalmers was a Tory, and the Church of Scotland, as an Establishment, was naturally of like political complexion. But the Church had nevertheless a distinct claim to the active friendship of the Whigs, for the Veto Act, before it was submitted to the Assembly, was, in the words of Chalmers's biographer, "sanctioned by the authority of

the legal and political advisers of the Crown in Scotland." The Whig officials must at least have considered the Act as within the competence of the General Assembly and entitled to take precedence of any statutes which might seem to be framed in a contrary sense. Lord Melbourne and his friends, however, parried with the question, skilfully contriving not to come to close quarters, and when the direction of affairs passed out of their hands into those of Peel no progress had been made towards a settlement.

The leaders of the Church now prepared a Claim of Right and insistently informed the Government that only by adopting this document could Her Majesty's Ministers preserve the peace and unity of the Establishment. Mr. Gladstone was at this time in frequent communication with Chalmers, whom in many essential respects he closely resembled, but the young statesman does not seem to have lifted a finger on behalf of the cause that the great Scottish Churchman held so sacred. Peel and his chief lieutenant, Graham, were openly hostile to the pretensions of the Church. The former considered them illegal, and the latter, in his most pompous and dogmatic manner, declared that these claims were opposed to

law, order, and common sense, and that the sooner the House of Commons extinguished them the better. Acting on the ill-informed and unwise advice of its leaders, the Commons rejected the Claim of Right. Thirty-seven Scottish members voted in the division—twenty-five for the Church of Scotland and twelve against her. It is, alas! hardly necessary to add that the gentlemen at St. Stephen's had probably but the vaguest idea of what all the hubbub was about. Certainly the House did not suspect the immense importance of the transactions in which it had taken a fatal part.

The Disruption was then resolved upon. The day fixed for the formal "coming out" was May 18, 1843, when the General Assembly should begin its annual meetings at Edinburgh. Excited speculation turned upon the number of ministers who would be found ready to sacrifice their churches, manses, and stipends to their principles, who would stake their worldly goods and prospects on this great hazard. The general opinion of the clubs was that not more than forty ministers would come out, and wagers were eagerly laid and accepted. Dr. Cumming, a distinguished Scots minister in London, informed the world that he was not satisfied that there would be

any secession, and asserted positively that, in any case, the extreme step would not be taken by more than a hundred ministers.

May 18th dawned heavy and raw. Yet as early as four o'clock in the morning people began to gather in St. Stephen's Church, where the sessions of the Assembly were to be held. They had nine weary hours to wait, but their patience was equal to that severe demand. That day there was little business done in the grey old city, the theatre of so many noble and stirring scenes. It was felt that the momentous event which was impending made the ordinary affairs of life trivial, insignificant, even despicable. Many strangers had come into the town. The streets were full of quiet, sad, earnest crowds.

In accordance with ancient custom the Lord High Commissioner made a State progress, with a brilliant cavalcade, from Holyrood Palace to St. Giles's Cathedral. The sermon by the retiring Moderator, Dr. Welsh, received an added solemnity for its references to the coming catastrophe. When it was ended the members of the Assembly made their way across the valley of the Nor Loch to George Street, in the new town where St. Stephen's Church is situated. Before the Court was constituted Dr. Welsh rose, amidst a throng

which crowded every nook and cranny of the building, and proceeded to read a protest, ending by intimating that he and those for whom he spoke would now withdraw. Handing the document to the Clerk, he bowed to the Lord High Commissioner, who returned the courtesy with deep emotion. Then, accompanied by Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Gordon, and followed by three hundred ministers, many elders and adherents, he walked down the aisle towards the door. The spectacle drew tears to many eyes.

May 18, 1843

When the procession emerged into the street a cheer of pride went up from the crowd. Presently, as the large numbers of the faithful ministers became apparent, and when it was seen that the flower of the Church of Scotland had felt constrained, for the sake of conscience and their Lord, to forsake her pleasant borders, a shout of exultation rent the air. So dense was the throng of spectators that it was difficult to make a pathway for the valiant confessors. The ministers were compelled to march three abreast, and in this order they wended their way, a procession of a quarter of a mile, to the Tanfield Hall, a vast, rude, barn-like structure prepared for them. This building,

which accommodated three thousand people, had been filled, in all the space available for the public, from an early hour in the morning. There the first General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland was formed, with Thomas Chalmers as Moderator. Up to this moment the skies had been sad and angry, but as the three thousand voices rose to sing, "O send Thy light forth and Thy truth," a sudden burst of sunlight filled the building. Five days later 470 ministers signed the Deed of Demission by which they formally laid down their charges in the Church of Scotland, and sacrificed an income of £100,000 a year. It was "a great day for the Church of Christ and for the world."

From the beginning of its career the Free Church of Scotland had a firm hold upon the affections of the people. Many persons of substance and influence gave their hearty support to the new communion—peers, baronets, knights, provosts, sheriffs, and a long train of gentry. The Chief Magistrate of Glasgow walked with the procession from St. Andrew's Church to the Tanfield Hall, where the ex-Provost of Glasgow and the Sheriff of Midlothian joined them. As convener of the Church Extension Committee (1834–1841) Chalmers had won a glorious

experience of Christian liberality. Within a few years £300,000 had been raised, and 220 churches built; but he could never have raised his eyes to the heights of sacrifice that the young Free Church was destined to scale. In the first year of its existence the new denomination built 500 churches, raised £68,700 for the Sustentation Fund (a creation of Chalmers's genius), and contributed £32,000 for various schemes of Christian philanthropy, a sum greater by £12,000 than had been raised by the undivided Church in 1842. It was this Free Church, starting sixty years ago with nothing, which in 1900, with over a thousand churches, a thousand manses, and other property estimated to be worth £10,000,000, linked its destinies with those of the United Presbyterian Church to become the United Free Church.

Chalmers lived four years after the Disruption—spent chiefly in the service of the poor and needy. Death touched him with a gentle hand while his intellect was still radiant and vigorous, and his natural force scarcely abated. He was found in bed one morning dead, in an attitude which suggested prayer. "When he was gone his contemporaries felt that the tender-hearted, high-minded, resolute old man, who had

comforted some of them and affronted others, was a man whom they might be proud to have lived with." His place is in "the noble company of the strong and meek who have not been afraid of the mightiest, and have not disdained to work for and with the lowliest."

VI

THE PRESENT CRISIS

THE House of Lords has recently decided that the Free Church of Scotland, in joining with the United Presbyterian Church, has departed from two of the fundamentals on which it based itself at the commencement of its history—the principle of Establishment and the doctrine of fore-ordination and election as taught in the Confession of Faith. This judgment, of which, among Scotsmen of intelligence and spiritual character, there is but one opinion, comprises the topics of this chapter; for the ecclesiastical history of Scotland since the Disruption may be summed up under three heads: first, a movement for union between the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches, begun hopefully, extinguished dismally, revived triumphantly; second, the gradual growth and final preponderance of Voluntary (or Disestablish-

ment) principles in the Free Church; and, third, the liberalising of Presbyterian theology.

I. First, then, as to Union. Four years after the Disruption, in 1847, the Secession Church and the Relief Church linked hands to form the United Presbyterian Church. There were then three great Presbyterian communions in Scotland, identical in doctrine—the Established Church, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church. The first, by reason of its connection with the State, was outside any movement for union on equal terms; individual members of the Free Church or the United Presbyterian Church might find a warm welcome, if they sought it, in the bosom of the Establishment, but only by surrendering the principles which had justified their severance from "the auld kirk." There seemed, however, to be no valid reason against an incorporating union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, and Dr. John Cairns,[1] a minister of

[1] The fame of Dr. Cairns has not travelled far beyond his native country. Yet one of his books, "Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century," is of enduring value. It is a better informed and far abler work than Sir Leslie Stephen's volume, written from

the latter body, a great saint and doctor of the Church of Christ, was the first to suggest (in 1863) that a movement should be made in that direction. Dr. R. S. Candlish, who had succeeded Chalmers in the leadership of the Free Church, cordially welcomed these overtures. An admirer of Candlish says that in listening to him every one felt that thoughts which had passed through his own mind in a crude and unsatisfactory condition were now put into a perfect form and clothed in transparent language. This is the hall-mark of a genius for leadership in great assemblies. Candlish declared that the two Churches were one "in principle, in profession, and in work."

The rock on which this fair, gallant young ship of Union foundered was the question of the relation between Church and State. The prevalent view among United Presbyterians was expressed thus: The Civil Magistrate is not judge for the community of what is true in religion, and has no authority to

the other point of view, on the same theme. Yet the latter is much better known than the former. The fact illustrates the enmity of the natural mind to the Gospel of Christ, and leads one to inquire concerning the value of such reputations as this world can give.

prescribe a creed or form of worship. On the other hand, many members of the Free Church held that the State might lawfully employ the national resources in the support of the Church's ordinances, and that the Church might lawfully accept such support when her spiritual independence was preserved entire. The difference, though radical, was merely theoretic, for Free Churchmen had practically abandoned all expectation of ever seeing an Establishment possessing the "entire spiritual independence" for which they stipulated as an essential condition of their return. In neither communion was profession of the prevalent view a term of membership. The obvious solution of the difficulty was to banish this worrying controversy about the Civil Magistrate to the limbo of "open questions." But a powerful minority of the Free Church, possessed by something akin to the ancient Cameronian spirit, would on no account consent to this. They considered it a vital matter that the Church should bear a decided testimony that it was the duty of the State to support, by its wealth and favour, the Gospel of Christ.

This minority, fearless and stubborn, was splendidly led by Dr. Begg. A famous

journalist,[1] shrewd and sympathetic, has left us an admirable characterisation of this tough old warrior, "possessed of no end of mental brawn and muscle, whose whole soul was bent upon fighting. There was such a look of determination in his face, such a rough strength in his rhetoric, such a fiercely contemptuous tone in his voice, or so much broad humour in the metaphors with which he shivered his enemy's arguments, that you couldn't help feeling that here, unmistakably, was a formidable adversary and a leader of men. Rather a hard, and not what you would call an amiable man; yet real, and outspoken and strong." Macdonell was of opinion that Dr. Begg, if he had been caught early enough, would have become, as a debater, the equal of any member of the House of Commons in the power of sheer hard hitting.

The Free Church opponents of Union had frequent recourse to grotesque misrepresentations of the Voluntary principle—as, for example, that the United Presbyterians desired to emancipate the Civil Magistrate from the control and influence of religion. Dr. Cairns actually found it necessary to "enun-

[1] James Macdonell, of the *Times*.

ciate in bold, clear terms the subjection of the Civil Magistrate to Him whom the Father hath made both Lord and Christ." The Voluntaries never dreamed of releasing the Civil Magistrate from that allegiance to Christ unto which all men in a Christian State are called. The Free Church minority, however, refused to be conciliated even by the explanations of Dr. Cairns, and made it clear to the majority that if the Union was accomplished a quite considerable portion of the Free Church would refuse to enter it. Further, it was known that the anti-Unionists had taken the opinion of counsel, and had been advised that in the event of a Disruption of the Free Church the minority could establish a legal right to the Church's property. The leaders of the majority were not prepared to face these risks of secession and loss, and the negotiations with the United Presbyterian Church, after lasting for ten years, were broken off. Candlish, however, expressed his confident belief that the Union was merely deferred. He did not expect to see the joyful day ; but "you will not all be in your graves before it comes," said he, and his words must have been recalled by many with a thrill of exultant gladness on that day four years

ago when the United Free Church was formed.

II. These protracted negotiations had clearly exhibited the growth of the Free Church towards a nobler conception of the relation between Christ's household and Cæsar. Many members of that body had come to see that the State establishment of religion was an injury and an insult to Christ. They perceived that it was utterly repugnant to the spirit of Christ that His Gospel should be maintained and spread except by the free-will offerings and labours of His own people, and they realised that their aim must be "not so much to right themselves as to right Christianity."

Accordingly, the only effect upon the Dissenting Churches of the Act abolishing patronage in the Church of Scotland, passed in 1874, was to stimulate the movement for Disestablishment. This measure did not mean the restoration to the Church of Scotland of the complete spiritual independence that she had claimed; indeed the Act itself, dealing with a matter so intimately related to the spiritual life of the Church as the settlement of her ministers, was another proof and illustration of her subordination to the State. Free Churchmen

could not return to such an Establishment; it is doubtful whether many would have returned even if the State had granted the demands of Chalmers and the leaders of 1843; a true instinct had sprung up in the Free Church that it was wrong to accept Cæsar's money, even if Cæsar consented to waive his authority. The Duke of Argyll, who supported the Patronage Act, admitted that the reunion of Scots Presbyterianism was now impossible except on the ground of Disestablishment. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone opposed the Bill because of the impetus it would give to the movement for Disestablishment. In solemn, earnest tones he called the attention of Mr. Disraeli's Government to the fact that the Free Church, for the first time in its history, had just declared by a large majority for Disestablishment. The House of Commons was not a little puzzled to hear the man who only a few years before had disestablished the Irish Church earnestly deprecating, in fearful, almost horror-struck whispers, any action which might produce a formidable movement in a like direction among the Scottish people. Disraeli bitingly expressed the hope that the right honourable gentleman's career was not going to in-

clude the disestablishment of a second Church.

The Tory Minister's fear was not realised. Scotland was ripe for Disestablishment in 1880, but Mr. Gladstone's distaste of the subject and absorption in other matters indefinitely postponed this measure of equity and freedom. For the last thirty years, however, the two great communions, now one in the United Free Church, have never wavered in their testimony for a free Church in a free State. The vast majority of Free Churchmen grew into identity with their brethren of the United Presbyterian Church in their view of Church-and-State questions; and that was one of the happy circumstances that made the Union, when it did take place in 1900, so easy, simple, and inevitable.

III. During the last sixty years the old hyper-Calvinistic theology of the Scots Presbyterian Churches has dwindled out of sight, and the process of liberalising the religious thought of the country has gone on uninterruptedly with the happiest results. The doctrine of election, as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, drawn up in 1647, was no new stumbling-block. Two years before the Disruption, the Rev. James Morison, a minister of the Secession

Church, revolted against the rigid Calvinism of the day and preached "the universality of the Atonement" with a vigour and assurance that gave great offence to his brethren. Morison was earnestly engaged in evangelistic labours; he was conscious of a commission from God to offer the Gospel to all men, and not a few anxious souls came to him to inquire whether, if they were not of the elect, this offer were not a mere ghastly mockery. Morison was one of the sweetest, gentlest, most inoffensive of men, an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile, but he could not find room for his views in the Secession Church and, being placed under a sentence of suspension, definitely withdrew from that communion; and on May 16, 1843, two days before the Disruption, became the founder of the Evangelical Union, a denomination which was honourably distinguished for evangelistic zeal and social service, and is now united with the Scottish Congregational Union. The judgment of Dr. Cairns on the Morison controversy was that it did something to liberalise Scottish theology without deranging its equilibrium.

More than thirty years after Morison quitted the Secession, the questions that he

had raised were again agitating the communion which had condemned him. The United Presbyterian Church had now been twenty years in existence, and to it must be assigned the great credit of having been the first Presbyterian Church which sought to bring its creed into living relation with its contemporary religious thought. A Church has fallen into a position greatly to be deplored and liable to grave misunderstanding and scandal, when its standard of faith and practice, like those of the Church of England, become, to a great extent, mere historical documents. There was a group of men in the United Presbyterian Church, the most brilliant of whom was George Gilfillan, who were for setting aside the Confession of Faith altogether and substituting a short, simple statement of the chief articles of Christian belief. But the Confession had been venerated as a document all but inspired for over two hundred years, and to discard it would have been, to many worthy, pious souls, a sore offence. Dr. John Cairns, the loved and trusted leader of the Church, lent the weight of his great authority against so revolutionary a course. The plan finally adopted was to issue an official authoritative gloss upon the passages in the Confession

which were proving stumbling-blocks to tender consciences.

"Some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." God chose the redeemed "without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them. The rest of mankind God passed by and ordained to dishonour and wrath." These statements are taken from Chapter III. of the Confession of Faith. They are not wanting in precision, ambiguity seems excluded; and from them certain definite conclusions of a painful and depressing character may be drawn. But let the reader judge of that matter for himself, and let him inquire of his own soul whether these expressions accord with the tenour and spirit of our Lord's teaching.

How did the United Presbyterian Church soothe the agonies of the sensitive souls who recoiled, sick with terror, from these awful words? It left the passage just as it stood, but it passed a Declaratory Act (1879) explaining or supplementing the statements of

the Confession. In this document the love of God to all mankind was declared; He gave His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and a free offer of salvation is made to all men without distinction on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice; it is God's will that all men should be saved, and every man is responsible for the way in which he deals with this free and unrestricted offer of eternal life. Most plain men would probably come to the conclusion, without much hesitation, that the Declaratory Act was inconsistent with the expressions from the Confession that we have quoted. But the subject is beyond most of us, and had better be left to the theologians. Dr. John Cairns, an intelligence as honest and powerful as Christ ever gave to His Church in Scotland, regarded the Act as merely elucidating or supplementing the Confession. In any case it gave relief to many burdened consciences and was undoubtedly a wise and statesmanlike step.

The Church further declared at this time that she did not require belief in the damnation of infants nor of the heathen. Liberty of opinion was allowed on such points as the "six days" in the Mosaic account of the creation, "the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity

and peace." This last clause is delightful. It is both an encouragement and a caution to the "higher critics"—"Go on as far as you like, provided you do not shock the average opinion of the Church too much. Assure yourselves before you venture to express your liberal views that they are not too strong for the weak brethren."

Twenty-three years later, in 1892, the Free Church adopted the same plan to meet the same difficulties. It should be clearly understood, with regard to both bodies, that it was only ministers and office-bearers who were required to give their assent to the Confession. During the past generation liberal views of theology had grown even more rapidly in the Free Church than in the sister communion, and a race of brilliant scholars had arisen who, while earnestly faithful to the great doctrines of the Evangelical faith, spoke another language than that of the Confession. Principal Rainy pointed out that if the Confession were not to become a mere historical document it was necessary that the Church should readjust her relation to it. Accordingly in the Declaratory Act the Free Church most earnestly proclaimed, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of grace, the love of God to sinners. In the

case of such as do not believe the Gospel, but perish in their sins, the issue was declared to be due to their own rejection of the Gospel call. Then followed a sentence which has acquired an immense importance from its influence in producing the recent decision of the House of Lords: "This Church does not teach, and does not regard the Confession as teaching the foreordination of men to death, irrespective of their own sin." I ask the reader to compare these statements with the extract from the Confession printed on p. 129, and to form his own opinion as to whether they are consistent. It may help him in coming to a conclusion—whether for their consistency or against it, I do not know—to learn that the Lord High Chancellor of England and two other members of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords have pronounced that the Declaratory Act puts an interpretation on the doctrine of Predestination that the Confession does not warrant.

One or two other points may be noticed. The Act declares that the Confession is not to be held as teaching the damnation of infants nor of the heathen who have not heard the Gospel. Intolerant or persecuting principles are disclaimed, and "diversity of

opinion is recognised on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith." The Church, however, retained her full authority to determine, in any case which might arise, what points fell within this description, and thus to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the detriment of sound doctrine, or the injury of her unity and peace. This last sentence is modelled upon the statement with which the Declaratory Act of the United Presbyterian Church concluded (see pp. 130–131). If the Acts in their entirety are read by the curious student he will at once notice their practical identity, in all the essential particulars.

This rapid summary has made it clear, I hope, that the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church were now identical in doctrine and in their views of ecclesiastical polity. Thirty years ago the former body, in the very act of indefinitely suspending negotiations with the United Presbyterian Church, declared that there was no objection in principle to union. In the meantime both Churches had revised their doctrinal standards in the same spirit, and the Free Church had moved rapidly towards a whole-hearted adoption of the Voluntary principle

for which the United Presbyterian Church had so long contended. The leaders of both bodies perceived that union was now nothing short of a Christian duty, and accordingly towards the close of 1900 the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, with a joint membership of over 490,000, blended their noble traditions, to flow henceforth in one mighty stream, bearing beauty and fruitfulness to many souls, as the United Free Church.

What has happened since then all the world knows. A very small minority of Free Church ministers refused to enter the Union, and, contending that the majority had departed from the conditions of the Trust under which they held their property, claimed that the places of worship, manses, colleges, public halls, and all the funds of the Free Church belonged to them. The Scottish Courts unanimously decided against them, but the House of Lords by five votes to two has decreed in their favour. We do not for a moment suggest that the judges did not strive to their utmost after the impartiality so frequently claimed as the glory of our courts of justice; but four out of the five were members of that party in the State which owes but little, to put it mildly, to the Free

Church, and it must have been a modest satisfaction to them, being but mortal men, to find their judicial intellects and political predilections running concurrently. On what grounds is the decision based? In the first place the Lords have refused to treat the Church as a living organism, but merely as an association of persons holding property. The Lord Chancellor became quite testy at the mention of the word "church." "Don't use that term," he said; "it only causes confusion; say the Trust." The Lords held that among the articles of association were, first, the principle of Establishment, and second, the doctrine of Election and Predestination as taught in the Confession of Faith. The five Lords declared that by entering a union in which the relation of the Church to the State was left as an open question the majority of the Free Church had violated the former article; three of the five were further of opinion, as we have stated, that the Declaratory Act was inconsistent with the Confession of Faith, and that the second article had also been violated. Judgment, therefore, was entered for the minority of less than thirty ministers, entitling them, it was stated, to over a thousand churches, a thousand manses, and property estimated at £10,000,000.

Later consideration shows that the extent to which the judgment will apply is a matter of considerable dubiety. When the Scots Court of Session next month (October) comes to consider the question of enforcing the Lords' decree, various facts, having an important bearing on the amount of property involved, will doubless be submitted to it. It can be proved quite conclusively that three-fourths of the funds at stake have been given to the Free Church since 1872, when the Assembly declared that there was no objection on principle to union with the United Presbyterian Church. Are the minority, having remained in the Church, or joined it, since that date, entitled, in law or equity, to this three-fourths? Again, out of £137,000 raised within the last ten years for Church extension in Glasgow, all but £15 was subscribed by men who entered the Union. Will the man who gave the £15 be appointed the administrator of the £137,000?

How can twenty-four Highland ministers preach from a thousand pulpits every Sunday, fill a thousand manses, and conduct three theological colleges for five months every year? Is it to be supposed that a thousand ministers and a thousand congregations will

be turned from their manses and churches into the streets, while in the meantime these buildings remain empty and untenanted? If Puck had taken his seat upon the woolsack of England the result could not have been more mischievous or more farcical. The decision of the Lords, were it not so vexatious, so distressing, so hostile to all living faith, would be worthy of comic opera. What must come to pass is not in doubt: if a conference of both parties does not yield a result satisfactory to both, a settlement that they will jointly and unanimously ask Parliament to legalise, then the Legislature must step in, invited or uninvited, and bring the situation into decent accord with sense and equity.

A multitude of results, many of them not yet even conceived, must follow from this fateful decision, but this is not the place to enter into what might well be an endless speculation. Sufficient to say that the lawyers must be taught by Parliament that a Church is not a Trust in the ordinary sense, not a mere joint-stock company regulated by such enactments as are familiar to the Stock Exchange. Further, it seems inevitable that the United Free Church should in the near future submit its constitution to a thorough

revision. It must be made clear to those who join her that they are allowed so to do only on condition that they recognise the right of the Church to revise her official standards, at any time, in the growing light vouchsafed by Christ.

May we not also say that many will be inclined to ask whether the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the instrument of a living Church, has not served its day, whether it should not now take its place as an interesting, valuable, significant document of history? The writer of these lines has for seventeen years "sat under" ministers who had signed the Confession, and he can testify, with joy and confidence, that there was only the most distant and frigid relation between the contents and, especially, the spirit of their sermons and the spirit and contents of the Confession of Faith; not that they have violated the Confession, it is only that they speak in another tongue and in quite other accents. During all these seventeen years he has heard the doctrine of election mentioned only once from the pulpit, and on that occasion the purpose of the minister was to denounce a sinner who desired to look into the book of God's decrees in order to discover whether, being one of the elect, he

might not safely go on in his evil courses. Twenty-five years ago, when the United Presbyterian Church was seeking to put herself into honest and vital relations with her official creed, it was proposed that the Confession should be discarded and that a short, simple compend of the fundamental Christian doctrines should take its place. This daring, radical project found little support, but in the near future it will meet with a readier acceptance. The Christian laity are discovering their interest in these matters, and if they can be persuaded to read the Confession of Faith and compare its contents with those of their own hearts, minds and souls, there can be little doubt as to the direction in which their influence will move. The Declaratory Acts are good enough in their way ; they show that a liberalising process has been going on, but they give a feeble idea of its extent, whether among ministers or laymen.

Fortunate, indeed, it is for the United Free Church, in times like these, so difficult, so full of large possibilities both of peril and blessing, that it is led by a man in whom it can have full confidence, whose primacy, in the combination of sagacity, disinterestedness, and character, is unchallenged. Dr. Rainy is

the commanding figure of the Church, the mountain that overtops all other eminences. Among Scots whose reputation is wholly, or almost wholly, confined to their native land, Principal Rainy is easily the first. He dominated the annual General Assembly of the Free Church in a manner without parallel, as not even Mr. Gladstone ever dominated the Liberal Party. No ecclesiastical leader in England has anything like the hold over the Assembly or Union or Conference of his denomination that Dr. Rainy has over the Free Church—and Scots ministers are often "kittle cattle." His genius as a master of assemblies is unrivalled; his powers of divining the feeling of an excited, tumultuous gathering of ecclesiastics, and of giving it expression, amounts to perfect instinct.

Dr. Rainy's greatness is equalled by his humility. Affectation and assumption are far removed from him; it might indeed have been better for his popular fame if he had cultivated something of "picturesque style." As it is, however, he seems to make his conquests with ease. He is not an orator in the popular, inaccurate sense, though no speaker can be more persuasive; his periods are elaborate, sometimes involved; not diffi-

cult to discern what is in the speaker's mind, it is sometimes hard to find it expressly stated.

Dr. Rainy has frequently been faced with very arduous situations, but he has always risen equal to them. His mind dwells in the high places, among the ample ether and the divine air. The story that this little book has had to tell is a story of suffering and sacrifice, crowned in every instance by triumph, and the writer cannot doubt that the United Free Church, under its great leader, will be granted a happy and speedy issue out of all her tribulation.

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